A SOMATIC MINDFULNESS PROJECT EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF MEDITATION ON ART APPRECIATION IN THE GALLERY SETTING

Merfat Mohammed M. Bassi

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2019

APPROVED:

Tyson Lewis, Major Professor
Laura Evans, Committee Member
Joris Vlieghe, Committee Member
Matthew Bourbon, Committee Member
Denise Baxter, Chair of the Department of Art Education and Art History
Greg Watts, Dean of the College of Visual Arts and Design
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School

Bassi, Merfat Mohammed M. *A Somatic Mindfulness Project Exploring the Effects of Meditation on Art Appreciation in the Gallery Setting*. Doctor of Philosophy (Art Education), December 2019, 244 pp., 16 figures, 4 appendices, references, 206 titles.

This dissertation describes the effects of a somatic mindfulness project on the way participants interact with and respond to works of art in a gallery setting. The study begins with a critique of Descartes' philosophy, Cartesianism, which emphasizes the role of the mind over that of the body and senses and argues that this thought continues to affect education even today. By contrast, phenomenology and mindfulness practices attempt to overcome Descartes' legacy by focusing on the importance of the body in lived experience. In particular, this study uses a phenomenological framework to conduct mindfulness on the relationship between the body and the perception of art. To do so, I utilized several phenomenological techniques for gathering data, including observations, video, and interviews, and I also created a unique method to analyze the data using a phenomenological verbal (written) description and visual (through photographic paintings) description. These techniques worked together to express the moment of reversibility between the meditative body and the artworks in the gallery setting. In sum, the findings of this study show that meditation changes the perceptual experience for different people in different ways. Another finding is that different forms of meditation may work better for some people than others. The findings of this study suggest that if art teachers are interested in using meditation, they need to be familiar with multiple forms of meditation. Also, they need to consider the role of the environment, as well as that of the artworks, in creating a wholistic meditative mood.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express her deep sense of gratitude to the following persons for the assistance extended by them:

To Dr. Tyson Lewis, my major professor, for his sincere guidance, expertise, untiring cooperation, valuable advice, and endless inspiration that enabled me to accomplish this research and overcome the problems I faced during the process of writing this research study.

To Dr. Laura Evans, Dr. Joris Vlieghe, and Professor. Matthew Bourbon, committee members, for providing their support, comments, suggestions, and encouragement.

To Brett Wallace for leading the meditation session of the somatic mindfulness workshop with my participants.

To my participants for working with me in the somatic mindfulness workshop and sharing their lived experience of this study.

To Jeffrey Rasch and Kathleen Prowell for providing their advice and assistance to develop the academic writing of this research study.

To my great parents for encouraging me in my academic journey and for supporting me to reach my goals by asking me to persevere in hard work.

To my lovely family for supporting me in the difficult times that have faced me in the graduate study stage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I made quick glances and tense strides with feelings of anxiety, fear, confusion, and distress from looking at paintings that included skulls, skeletons, and graveyards in one of the galleries in the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC). At that time, I had physical, mental, and emotional obstacles and barriers when I encountered these artworks in the gallery setting. My body urged me to stay away from these artworks and not approach them. My mind was refusing to interact with these artworks, or even think about the meaning behind them. Indeed, I realized how my mind and body connected with each other when I was at the gallery; both of them urged me to ignore this kind of art. However, these internal concerns (their preferences, assumptions, or expectations) prevented me from engaging in these artworks and making a connection with the whole environment as well. Later, I wondered how art educators could help their students to overcome the internal and external inhibitions that hinder them from experiencing and appreciating various kinds of visual art and to help them develop an open sensory, physical, and visual experience. To answer this question, I tuned toward phenomenology and its understanding of the mind-body connection as well as the practice of mindfulness. The following dissertation is an attempt to explore how certain kinds of mindfulness techniques might enable individuals to become more receptive to aesthetic experience, even if their initial reaction might be dismissive.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Educational practices and beliefs in the West have been limited by the ongoing influence of the inheritance of Cartesianism, which has led to a decrease in the belief in the importance of sensations, the body, and emotions in the learning process (Anderson, 2003; Cunliffe, 2005; Ergas, 2012, 2013; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Lewis, 2013; Merleau-Ponty, 2004; van

Manen, 2014). Cartesianism divides the mind from the body, privileges the mind, and associates the sense of sight/vision with the mental, thus creating a hierarchy among the senses. Opposing the dominant trend, the field of the phenomenology of embodiment has consistently undermined Cartesian dualisms and hierarchies (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Clark, 1999; Cunliffe, 2005; Gallagher, 2005; Hartjen, 2012; Horst, 2005; Meier, Schnall, Schwarz, & Bargh, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 2004, 2012).

Phenomenology of embodiment focuses on how the body plays an active role in shaping what can be thought, thus undermining any priority given to the mind as separate and different from the body. We can see the impact of the phenomenology of embodiment, firstly, through the concepts of "soma-aesthetic" practices in art education (Duncum, 2012; Gershon, 2011; Greene, 1977; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Laban, 2014; Lankford, 1984; Lewis, 2013, 2016; D. Madenfort, 1973; W. J. Madenfort, 1972; Montgomery-Whicher, 1997; Proweller, 1973; Springgay, 2005, 2008; Streb, 1984; Uhrmacher, 2009) and in museum education (Arnold, Meggs, & Greer, 2014; Classen, 2007; Garoian, 2001; Kozlowski, 2013; Mangione, 2016; Nordlund, 2016; Naumova, 2015; Sturken, 2015; Wood & Latham, 2011). Secondly, we recognize the impact of the phenomenology of embodiment through the concepts of mindfulness practices in art education (Chung, 2011; Costantion, 2005; Gradle, 2011; Kan, 2011; Kohler, 2012; Montgomery-Whicher, 1997; Patterson, 2015; Rohloff, 2008; Shauck, 2017) and in museum education (Chung, 2011; Costantion, 2005; Duncan, 2014; Estep, 2012; Ferreira, 2015; Heyn, 2015; Hughes & Moscardo, 2017; R. C. Roberts, 2013; Rohloff, 2008; Rosenbloom, 2014).

Both kinds of practices, soma-esthetic and mindfulness practices, emphasize the important role of the body in the world. These practices have specific ways, such as

strengthening the body, meditation, and breathing, to improve thinking and develop the mind in relation to embodied experience. Recently, many studies in the art education and museum education fields have focused on the importance of integrating the sensorial curriculum into education by encouraging educators to support students' understanding of their senses as embodied experiences (Garoian, 2001; Gershon, 2011; Greene, 1977; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Laban, 2014; Lankford, 1984; D. Madenfort, 1973; W. J. Madenfort, 1972; Naumova, 2015; Proweller, 1973; Springgay, 2005). These studies motivated me to look deeply at the role of the body and senses in the educational environment, particularly in the fields of art education and museum education.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

I am interested in meditation and mindfulness of breathing, and in how they can affect our experience of art in a gallery setting. After engaging in guided meditation and breathing in connection with art appreciation and various art-making activities with Brett Wallace at the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC), I realized that I had had different kinds of experiences of engaging with art after I meditated. I became interested in whether or not this would hold true for others. In this study, first, I worked with art education students to explore how guided and walking meditation along with mindfulness of breathing practices affected the way they experienced visual art in a gallery setting. Second, I wanted to see if these practices would develop or enhance the sensory experience of art for art education students.

This study investigated the role of the body and senses in the experience of art by focusing on the phenomenology of embodiment theory. I led study participants in employing mindfulness practices and soma-esthetic practices in a gallery setting to understand how these approaches might or might not affect the overall experience of art. My goal was to explore how

art educators and museum educators might be able to integrate a mindfulness sensorial curriculum into their pedagogy so that they can help students to develop their sensory experiences.

1.3 Research Questions and the Outlines

In the following paragraphs, I present the main questions and sub-questions that helped me understand how to design the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) for my participants using different kinds of meditation in a gallery environment.

1.3.1 Main Research Questions

- How do guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing affect the way art education students experience visual art in a gallery setting?
- Can these practices transform, deepen, or further develop the sensory experience of art, and if so, how?

1.3.2 Sub-Research Questions

1. What is special/unique about visual art in a gallery setting in relation to the embodied experience?
2. What kinds of visual art might help participants to form a connection between the self and the world?
3. How might meditation affect the sense of the self?
4. Where is the sense of self before and after the practicing of different kinds of meditation, especially when participants encounter visual art in the gallery setting?
5. How could using the visual (photographic painting) description along with the verbal (written) description be of aid in representing (depicting) the perceptual experience of participants?

In the following chapters of this work, I investigate these questions via a deep discussion of the literature review and a presentation of a descriptive study of my personal narrative experience, which together contributed to the construction of the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) and the extraction of interpretations of the results of this study.

1.3.3 The Outline of the Study

In this section, I introduce the chapters of this study and describe how I organized each in relation to my research questions.

- Chapter 2: Literature Review

I explore the phenomenology of embodiment, focusing on three approaches: the theoretical/analytical approach, the pragmatic approach, and the practical approach. The theoretical/analytical approach involves theory by Merleau-Ponty, focusing on the importance of the body and the senses; his later work points out the relationship between perception and visual art, especially painting, which is important for my study. In this section, I emphasize the meaning of the maximal/optimal grip in terms of Merleau-Ponty's discussion of how the body tries to reach the moment of reversibility between the subject (viewer) and the object (visual art) in the world. Next, I discuss a pragmatic study by Richard Shusterman that relates to Merleau-Ponty's perspective, involving soma-aesthetics and mindfulness meditation. In this Chapter, I provide definitions of soma-aesthetics and mindfulness meditation and explore the benefits of using them in the art education and museum education fields. Finally, the section on the practical approach discusses how sensorial practices and mindfulness meditation practices are introduced into general education, art education, and museum education.

- Chapter 3: Methodology: Phenomenological Research Methods

I explain the importance of using hermeneutic phenomenology as a theoretical framework along with phenomenological research methods for understanding how meditation can affect the way participants experience visual art in a gallery setting. I discuss the ways in which previous studies and my personal experience inspired me to create the somatic mindfulness project. In this section, I discuss how to write a good phenomenological description,

beginning with the important role of a first-person perspective in the lived experience in order to shift intentionality. In this Chapter, I discuss my role as a phenomenological researcher who might affect this study, focusing on the question "who am I?" In the section on the data collection procedure, I explain the phenomenological qualitative methods—observation, interviews, and descriptions—that I used with my participants in the somatic mindfulness project (SMP). Next, I describe the structure of the three-day workshop with its three stages before and after the practice of guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing. In the section on the data analysis procedure, I explain my use of a unique method to analyze the data by applying a verbal (written) description and a visual (photographic painting) description, which helped me embody the phenomenon of the perceptual experience of my participants when they encountered the visual art in the gallery.

- Chapter 4: Personal Phenomenological Narrative

I describe my own lived experience when I interned in the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC), focusing on who I am as a phenomenological researcher. I explain how I engaged with the visitors and observed them when they were encountering visual art at the gallery site. Then I describe my participation with Brett Wallace, who was the leader of the sessions on guided meditation with art-making and art-appreciation in the GDAC. In this Chapter, I highlight the importance of this experience, which inspirited me to design the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) for my participants to practice different kinds of meditation in the GDAC site.

- Chapter 5: Data Collection: Somatic Mindfulness Project (SMP)

I start this section by explaining how I prepared (SMP), and I give a clarification of the reasons for choosing the *Structured Light* exhibition as the location for this study. Next, I describe the structure of the somatic mindfulness workshop for three consecutive days on which

I observed my participants when they encountered the visual art in the gallery and focused on how their perceptual, visual, and physical experience changed before and after they practiced guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing. In this section, I give examples of the reciprocal relationship that developed between the researcher and her study in terms of how the researcher affected and was affected by the study.

- Chapter 6: Summary

I integrate the personal meaning-making on the part of the researcher when I observed the participants with the social meaning-making related to the interviews and the phenomenological description by the participants. I discuss how the participants changed the movement and gestures of their bodies when they were walking around the gallery; I describe different patterns of the meditative body of my participants when they encountered some specific artworks. Importantly, I include a unique technique to this study of using the Arabic and English definitions to describe the different meditative bodies of my participants.

- Chapter 7: Data Analysis

I interpret this phenomenon by using a unique method that combines the verbal and visual: the first method is the verbal description related to the phenomenology of the body theory by Merleau-Ponty, which explains the concept of maximal grip. The second is the visual description that helped me to portray the moment of reversibility (chiasm) that occurred between the participants (the subject) and the artworks (the object) in the gallery (the world). In this section, I emphasize that because I am an artistic-phenomenological researcher, I understand the importance and the means of using the visual (photographic painting) description in addition to the verbal (written) description to reveal the fundamental meaning of the experience. Moreover, I explain that not only did using the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing

affect the perceptual experience of the participants, but also there were other factors that helped them to engage in a meditative mood.

- Chapter 8: Conclusion

I highlight the fundamental meanings of this study that focused on how meditation changes the perceptual experience of the participants in different ways. I also address the question of how different forms of meditation could work with some people better than with others. Next, I return to the literature review and try to fill the gap left by previous studies in terms of the fundamental meanings of my study. Then I introduce the limitations of this work and describe the kinds of challenges and difficulties that I faced in my study. Moreover, in the implications of this research, I suggest that art teachers interested in using meditation with their students need to understand more about the importance of practicing multiple forms of meditation and to be aware of how the outcomes of practicing meditation could be varied. Also, art teachers need to understand the role of the environment, the art, and the artist, which will help them to engage in a meditative mood. Finally, I indicate future research directions.

1.4 Assumptions of the Study

The key inspiration for the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) was my personal experience of practicing guided meditation and breathing for art-appreciation and art-making activities with Brett Wallace at the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC). Prompted by my own experience, which led me to the research questions, how guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing affects the way art education students experience and appreciate visual art in a gallery setting and whether these practices can transform or further develop the sensory experience of art, I decided to share this experience with other art education students in sessions led by Brett Wallace in the GDAC. My tentative hypothesis, based on the existing literature and

my own experience, was that such mindfulness practices might lead to an expanded sensorium and deeper critical reflection on the experience of art. In fact, my own experience has affected me in terms of perception and mindfulness by providing more possibilities for me to understand the world around me. This was the initial starting point for the study as a whole and my guiding assumption.

1.5 Rationales

As an art educator who has taught for eight years in the College of Art and Design in Saudi Arabia, I found there is little interest in or knowledge of how to practice meditation in the educational fields. Art educators focus on the importance of production and the outcomes of the students more than on how they can develop or enhance their perceptual, visual, and physical experience in the practice of making or reflecting on art. In fact, art educators face many problems with their students lacking sufficient experience of how to deal with this kind of obstacle, which affects the learning and teaching process. For example, I had this kind of problem with my students when they were afraid to engage with art-making activities because their major was fashion design, and they did not have enough experience with art. Therefore, I was determined to reach my goal and push them forward. At that time, the only thing I did was to encourage them by saying, “Don’t let your fear prevent you from achieving your goals.” I also told them, “You just need to stay focused on what you are doing now.” I added, “I trust you, and you need to trust yourself and your ability.” I advised them to engage in the process without thinking about any negative messages. In sum, I tried to support them and provide some positive values, but I did not realize that I could have been more effective if I had asked them to meditate and make a connection between the body and the mind in the present moment of the perceptual experience. My rationale for this study is precisely to cultivate pedagogical practices that might

help students overcome such anxiety and embrace a variety of aesthetic experiences with open receptivity.

1.6 Operational Definitions

- *Analytic somaesthetics*. Analytic somaesthetics as "the basic nature of bodily perceptions and practices and also of their function in our knowledge and construction of reality" (Shusterman, 1999, p. 304).
- *Body scan*: Body scan includes six strategies that help participants sharpen their attention and be aware of the present moment (Shusterman, 1999).
- *Bracketing*: "Bracketing means parenthesizing, putting into brackets the various assumptions that might stand in the way from opening up access to the originary or the living meaning of a phenomenon" (van Manen, 2014, p. 215).
- *Chiasm*: The chiasm is the depth of the visible existing between two, seemingly opposite worlds that allows the self and otherness to meet (Johnson, 1993).
- *Flesh*: Flesh is not the body, not an idea, but rather a general unconscious communication with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). "The doubling with difference between self and world is the meaning of Flesh" (Johnson, 1993, p. 49).
- *Gestalt psychology* focuses on how humans perceive wholes, not parts, and these wholes have a foreground and a background which combine to form a "scene" or "view" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, 2012).
- *Icon meditation*: "the icon was the genre through which the devices and compositions of antique portraiture were transmitted through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Icons were the defining force of Byzantine art" (Fliegel, 2012, p. 24). The meaning of the word "icon" is the image.

- *Imaginative variations*: Imaginative variations is a classic phenomenological theme by Husserl that takes a phenomenon then tries to imagine it in as many ways as possible to create variations of narratives or meanings in the experience.

- *Intentionality*: Intentionality as referring to the invisible thread that connects all beings with their world, whether they are aware of this relationship or not (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

- *Mandala meditation*: "The mandala is one of humankind's most ancient art forms. With the circle as its basis, it reflects eternity and all of nature. Types of mandalas may be found in all religions, as well as in psychology" (Carson, 2017, para. 1).

- *Maximum of visibility/grip*: Maximum of visibility/grip relates to our optimal distance when we look slowly at a painting and move mindfully in the gallery to create a balance between the visible and invisible worlds (Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

- *Meditation*: Meditation is "the process by which we go about deepening our attention and awareness, refining them, and putting them to greater practical use in our lives" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 1).

- *Memento mori*: "Visual reminders — often called memento mori, the Latin phrase for 'Remember that you will die' — are one way we can keep our impending death in mind" (Noble, 2017, para. 9).

- *Mirror*: The mirror is as an "outline of the metaphysical structure of Flesh. In the mirror, the entire room is digested in reverse, what is on my left becomes what is on my right" (Johnson, 1993, p. 48).

- *Perception*. "Perception is a bodily phenomenon, which is to say that we experience

our own sensory states not as mere states of mind, but as states of our bodies" (Carman, 2008, p. 80).

- *Phenomenology*. Phenomenology is the description of lived experience for the purpose of revealing the fundamental structures or meaning that enable any experience to be the kind of experience it is (Heidegger, 1962).

- *Practical somaesthetics*: "Practical somaesthetics is instead all about actually practicing such care through intelligently disciplined body work aimed at somatic self-improvement (whether in a representational, experiential, or performative mode)" (Shusterman, 1999, p. 304).

- *Pragmatic somaesthetics*. Pragmatic somaesthetics, "has a distinctly normative, prescriptive character by proposing specific methods of somatic improvement and engaging in their comparative critique" (Shusterman, 1999, p. 304). Pragmatic somaesthetics has two modes: representational and experiential. The representational (such as cosmetic) somaesthetics relates to the exterior of the body; in contrast, experiential (such as yoga) somaesthetics aims to enrich our somatic experiences with a sharper perspective (Shusterman, 2000, 2008, 2012).

- *Reduction*: "Phenomenology is the method to break through this taken-for-grantedness and get to the meaning structures of our experiences. This basic method is called the reduction" (van Manen, 2014, p. 215).

- *Reversibility*: Reversibility is called the mystery, the intertwining, or chiasm, which is the relationship between visible and invisible dimensions of experience (Johnson, 1993).

- *Soma-esthetics*: Soma-esthetics and somatic experience focuses on the role of bodily experience in aesthetic appreciation (Shusterman, 1992, 1999, 2000, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015).

- *Tempo and rhythm*: Tempo and rhythm are kinds of changes in the slowness or fastness of the physical, mental, and emotional reactions, such as movement, body postures, and breathing.

- *Visibility and invisibility*: "Visibility and invisibility are not the mere presence and absence of visual input; they are our 'absolute proximity' to and 'irremediable distance' from things" (Carman, 2008, p. 189).

1.7 Summary

The study of the phenomenology of the embodiment corrects the lack of attention paid to the importance of the body and senses in Western traditions. This is a real problem that must be taken into consideration by art educators to help their students to understand the importance of using both sensorial practices and mindfulness meditation practices in art education and museum education. To cultivate a phenomenological point of view to develop art education practice, I wished to create the somatic mindfulness project (SMP), based on a review of the literature and my previous lived experience in the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC). My personal experience created more possibilities for me to discover the meaning of aesthetic phenomena and to understand how to reveal the fundamental meaning of such experiences by focusing on body, perception, and visual experience as it is lived. This experience helped me understand how to plan my research project, focusing on how guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing could help art education students experience visual art in the gallery setting and how it could contribute to the development of their sensorial, visual, and physical experience.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Before introducing the theme of the phenomenology of embodiment and soma-aesthetics, I here situate these philosophical approaches against the backdrop of Cartesianism. This literature review has two sections. The first section introduces the reader to the problem of Cartesianism by focusing on Descartes' philosophy. Then the second section focuses on three topics. The first is a clarification of the important aspects of the phenomenology of embodiment through a consideration of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which leads to a pragmatic approach to understanding two practices: soma-aesthetics and mindfulness. Next, I discuss practical studies that incorporate 1) the phenomenology of the body into art education and museum education, and 2) mindfulness meditation into art education and museum education.

2.1 What Is Cartesianism?

In this section, I first give a brief overview of Descartes' philosophy, Cartesianism, which focuses on the dualism between the mind and body. Next, I point out certain problems with Cartesian thought which affect education today by decreasing the importance accorded to sensations and emotions in the learning process. Then I highlight potential solutions to the problems identified with Cartesian beliefs made possible by a shift from Cartesian ideas to the phenomenology of embodiment theory.

2.1.1 The Philosophy of Descartes

Descartes's philosophy focused on the dualism between the mind and the body, and this dualism has been a consistent source of philosophical problems since then (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Descartes, 2006; Lewis, 2013; Merleau-Ponty, 2004, 2012;

Parvizian, 2016; Shusterman, 1992). Descartes' (2006) two major theses are that "God exists and that the mind is distinct from the body" (p. 3). Not only did he separate mind and body, but he also privileged mind over body, stating that "A body can very easily perish, whereas the mind by its nature is immortal" (p. 8). Descartes (2006) believed that "We cannot understand a body to be anything but divisible, whereas we cannot understand the mind to be anything but indivisible" (p. 7). He contended, "The senses are sometimes deceptive; and it is a mark of prudence never to place our complete trust in those who have deceived us even once" (p. 10). Descartes (2006) referred to the separation between the body and the mind; he gave more power to the mind and decreased the importance of the body and senses by stating that the body deceives us and that we can therefore not trust it.

2.1.2 The Limitation of Descartes' Philosophy and the Cartesian Model

Many scholars, however, have argued there are problems with this philosophy, which depends on decreasing or negating the role of body and sensation in cultivating an understanding of self and world (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2004, 2012; Shusterman, 1992, 2000, 2008, 2012; van Manen, 2014). Descartes's philosophy evolved into the Cartesian model in which a sharp separation is made between thinking, including all aspects of the mind, and the physical world, including the body (Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007). Moreover, Descartes did not merely argue against the importance of the function of the body and senses in the world; he also ignored the significant role of the painting in cultivating the perceptual experience of the viewer who seeks to reach toward the depth of these artworks, instead focusing more closely on the details and engravings of the painting (Brubaker, 2003; Carman, 2008; Clark, 2015; Hung, 2013; Johnson, 1993; Low, 2000; Mazis, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 1993, 2004, 2012; Quinn, 2009). In *Dioptrics*, Descartes did

not want to commit to the importance of the visible and instead wanted to reformulate it in a way that would rely on "model-in-thought," as Merleau-Ponty (1993) pointed out. Descartes excluded the power of embodied vision by trying to understand how vision works intellectually or spiritually; Merleau-Ponty (1993) noted, "For him, there is no vision without thought: but it is not enough to think in order to see" (p. 135). Thus, Descartes confirmed his dualism between the body and mind, emphasizing the importance of the mind above the body.

In addition, educational theorist van Manen (2014) critiqued Descartes on his dualism, stating that mind and body are connected and associated together in the real world, and that therefore they cannot be separated. Hartjen (2012) pointed out a limitation of the Cartesian view, that although the body is an active tool of cognition, it is considered subservient to the mind in the dualistic view of the Cartesian mind/body split (Hartjen, 2012). Consequently, the Cartesian schema has diminished the value accorded to the emotions, the body, and sensations in the education process (Ergas, 2012, 2013, 2014b; Hubard, 2007). Cartesian thought still affects education today in terms of the belief in logical analysis, measurability, and the emphasis on controlling physical emotions to enhance cognitive performance; however, there is increasing evidence supporting the notion of embodied cognition (Hubard, 2007). Some scholars from the cognitive sciences have investigated this problem of the influence of the traditional view in education and art education, and they have urged integrating the body and mind in approaches to education and particularly art education today (Carman, 2008; Carter & Stephenson, 2012; Cunliffe, 2005; Ergas, 2012, 2013, 2014b; Fendler, 2012; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Lewis, 2013, 2016; Merleau-Ponty, 2004; Power, 2009; Vlieghe, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b). For example, Hubard (2007) pointed out that "experiences with works of art can be simultaneously conceptual and embodied; they can set in motion at once a person's reason, senses, emotions,

and motor channels of response" (p. 47).

Studies in cognitive science have discovered that thoughts and concepts originate in and through physical experiences and have also demonstrated the important role of embodied cognition (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Ellsworth, 2005; Gallagher, 2005; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Merleau-Ponty, 2004, 2012; Shusterman, 2012). For instance, Gallagher (2005) emphasized that in addition to the significant function of embodiment in constructing experience, action, and cognition, perceptional/physical experience is considered essential for different styles of cognition and action. In sum, the phenomenology of the body and scholarship based in the field of cognitive science have begun to recognize that the body plays an important part in both cognition and action; this view is presented more fully in the next section of this work.

2.2 Phenomenology of the Body

In this section, I focus on the theory of phenomenology of the body; this section is divided into three topics. The first topic is a clarification of the important aspects of the phenomenology of embodiment through a consideration of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which leads to the second part - a pragmatic approach to two practices, soma-aesthetics and mindfulness. Next, I discuss practical studies that incorporate 1) phenomenology of the body into art education and museum education, and 2) mindfulness meditation into art education and museum education.

2.2.1 The Theoretical/Analytical Approach

Philosophers and scholars have proposed an alternative to the Cartesian model with the concept of phenomenology of embodiment, which emphasizes the ways in which the body has a significant role in the world (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Flannery, 1978,

1981; Gallagher, 2005; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Heidegger, 1962; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Lewis, 2016; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2004, 2012; Shusterman, 2008, 2012; Zahavi, 2004). In this section, I highlight the philosophical perspective of Heidegger, which focuses on a fundamental question: the meaning of Being. Then I discuss the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, which provides a clear answer to the basic question of the faith of the world. Above all, I demonstrate the importance of the body in the world for providing the meaning of Being and discuss how the body plays an active role in reinforcing clear thinking without there being a need for a hierarchy of senses. Providing an overview of the theoretical work of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty is important for this study because these philosophers offer a different starting point from Cartesianism: one that is much more focused on lived experience and the body.

2.2.1.1 Martin Heidegger: The Meaning of Being

Phenomenology is the description of lived experience for the purpose of revealing the fundamental structures that enable any experience to be the kind of experience it is (Heidegger, 1962). Phenomenology focuses on what is familiar to us, what we intuitively know but pay no attention to in our lives, i.e., that which is very close to us (Heidegger, 1962). By focusing on lived experience, Heidegger (1962) explained, phenomenology attempts to uncover fundamental structures that are basic to things we do, such as routine duties.

Heidegger (1962) also defined a fundamental problem that faced philosophy: the fundamental question of the meaning of Being (Who am I? Who are you?). However, Heidegger argued that we cannot answer this question if we don't know the meaning of beings. Thus, we must start with a phenomenology of our everyday encounters with beings in order to get at Being (the meaning of beings as the kinds of beings they are). Indeed, phenomenology is interested in existential features that are common to all beings, which is a generalizable structure that enables

Being to appear as meaningful beings. Take for instance a being, let's say a classroom table. It is average, and we rarely stop to think about how the table can come to be perceived as the kind of thing that it is: a table. Only through an analysis of our engagement with this piece of equipment through our everyday routine duties (such as eating and doing homework) does the table become a table. The meaning of the Being of the table as a table thus comes through *us* and our everyday encounters with it.

From a phenomenological point of view, Heidegger (1962) insisted that we know ourselves not through mental reflection but through our interactions with beings around us (like tables). Thus, self-understanding arises first and foremost through our actions; we are actions in context. We open ourselves to what the context calls for, and we respond to this call through our actions; this is referred to as *Dasein* "being-there" – existence (Heidegger, 1962). Thus, Being (meaning) comes through engaged action in a world of equipment (like tables) and actions (like eating and studying).

Obviously, Heidegger's philosophy rejects Cartesianism, which has not just privileged the mind over the body but also ignored the important role of the body and sensations. This contradicts the meaning of Being for Heidegger's philosophy. The meaning of things is determined through our actions, not our thinking. We can recognize who people are, and what role they play in a society, based on their actions. For example, we can distinguish whether a person is a teacher or student, a parent or child, and an employer or employee by what they do in the world. In the next section of this study, I highlight the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, which was grounded on Heidegger's philosophy.

2.2.1.2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty: The Faith of the World

Merleau-Ponty took up Heidegger's basic phenomenological insights about the primacy

of acting over thinking and focused more on the body and senses (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Flannery, 1978, 1981; Gallagher, 2005; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Hartjen, 2012; Heidegger, 1962; Hubard, 2007; Lewis, 2016; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2004, 2012; Shusterman, 1992, 2000, 2008, 2012; Zahavi, 2004). Importantly, for Merleau-Ponty, it is not only that "perception is already meaningful" but also that "perception is educated by experience" (Gallagher and Zahavi, 2008, p. 7). Carman (2008) underlined the importance of lived experience, which is an anchor of perception; he asserted that "Perception is a bodily phenomenon, which is to say that we experience our own sensory states not as mere states of mind, but as states of our bodies" (p. 80). Where Cartesians would argue that the senses receive meaningless information that is then processed by the mind, Merleau-Ponty turns to lived experience itself to argue that perception is always packed with significance.

Merleau-Ponty (1969) described how a person's perception of objects could be developed through prolonged practice to bring beings and experiences into focus. Our bodies are anchored in worlds, and we move through these worlds searching for maximal perceptual grip so that beings can reveal themselves to us in their own special ways. Think about looking at a painting in a gallery. The body adjusts itself by moving forward and back, to the left and to the right, squinting or opening the eyes wide. All these gestures are unconscious ways the body adjusts itself to the conditions at hand to maximally perceive the work of art. In other words, through such gestures, a person's perception of objects becomes sharper and clearer, leading to increased awareness of the world.

According to Merleau-Ponty (1968), the origin of the faith in sharing the same experience with others doesn't come from thinking, but rather comes from our sensory perception of using our senses to explore this experience; this is the focal point of his research. Indeed, perceptual

faith depends on the flesh – the intertwining/the chiasm. Obviously, the flesh is not physical or mental, but phenomenological. Carman (2008) articulated Merleau-Ponty's beliefs about flesh, that "body and world must be seen as overlapping sinews in a common 'flesh' (chair), related not as situation (let alone stimulus and response), but as a kind of 'chiasm,' an 'interweaving' or 'interlacing' (entrelacs) of threads in a single fabric" (p. 80). Merleau-Ponty (1968) said the flesh is not the body, not an idea, but rather a general unconscious communication with the world.

Carman (2008) explained how vision and movement are interwoven together through this flesh in order to help our bodies convey the self between two different worlds: the visible and the invisible. Carman (2008) defined the visible world as "a domain of obstacles and opportunities, a field of possible behaviors and actions" (p. 185); this visible world, as Carmen (2008) confirmed, "does not stand over against us as a mere object or appearance, for there is a bond between us and it, in virtue of which we are in a position to perceive it" (pp. 185-186). Also, he illustrated the relationship between these two opposite sides of the world: "visibility and invisibility are not the mere presence and absence of visual input; they are our 'absolute proximity' to and 'irremediable distance' from things" (Carman, 2008, p. 189). Therefore, I want to emphasize the significant role of our bodies in the phenomenological experience, one which helps us move through two different worlds in order to discover the fundamental meaning of the aesthetic experience.

In sum, Merleau-Ponty expands our understanding of phenomenology to consider the body (as our anchor in the world), perception (as always meaningful), and the flesh (which enables bodies to interact in a shared world). This study focuses on how the body is the anchor of our perceptual experience and is always meaningful through the mystery of the flesh and of our relationship with others in the world. According to Merleau-Ponty (2004), "The world of

perception, or in other words the world which is revealed to us by our senses and in everyday life, seems at first sight to be the one we know best of all" (p. 31). The early work of Merleau-Ponty emphasized the idea that the world is rich with numerous lived experiences that are waiting for us to observe them with our sensorial perception. The actions will not be meaningful if we have not reacted with them and apprehend the fundamental meaning of our experience.

However, the later more profound work of Merleau-Ponty, "*Eye and Mind*," is where he makes concrete phenomenological analyses of the creation and appreciation of the work of art (Brubaker, 2003; Carman, 2008; Clark, 2015; Hung, 2013; Johnson, 1993; Low, 2000; Mazis, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2004, 2012; Quinn, 2009). Low (2000) stated that "*Eye and Mind*" is a philosophical study containing a fundamental reevaluation of classical metaphysics and an ontology of visibility and invisibility. Merleau-Ponty analyzed the traditional technique of geometric representation in Descartes's work and in Renaissance painting, and he compared them with the modern painting of some artists, such as Cezanne, Matisse, and Klee. Some scholars pointed out the reason for Merleau-Ponty's painting selections; for example, Johnson (1993) and Mazis (2012) pointed out that the rich meaning of these paintings prompts the viewers to look at the depth in these works and to connect this depth with an understanding of perception itself, as it is lived.

In addition, Merleau-Ponty (2004) confirmed that there is a relationship between painting and perception in that "painting thrusts us once again into the presence of the world of lived experience" (p. 69). Carmen (2008) explained how Merleau-Ponty saw this relationship, he highlighted that "Like perception itself, painting is not just directed toward but embedded in the world" (p. 180). Also, Low (2000) pointed out this relationship between perception and painting: "Both perception and a painting open a visual experience, a visual expanse for the perceiver" (p.

58). Merleau-Ponty (1993) explained how painting helps the viewer to be mindful and conscious of the world around him:

> Painting encourages a viewer to see his or her own act of seeing, and by doing so, makes present the implicit and taken-for-granted background of Being that animates our experience. These practices could help the self to transform from the visible world to the invisible world.

Merleau-Ponty (1993) provided a clear understanding of how a painter sees the visible world by being able to "look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he sees" (p. 123). Many scholars and philosophers have discussed the important role of the painter by observing the world through Merleau-Ponty's perspective (Brubaker, 2003; Carman, 2008; Clark, 2015; Hung, 2013; Johnson, 1993; Low, 2000; Mazis, 2012; Quinn, 2009). For example, Johnson (1993) stated that Merleau-Ponty gave more value to painting and painters than to philosophy in describing the invisible world. He said that "Merleau-Ponty believed that the invisible depth and richness of the visible had been better approached through the colors of painters than through philosophy" (p. 37). Therefore, Johnson (1993) suggested that for this reason, we need to find "a new philosophical language" concerning the mystery of the world that speaks in silence, as visual art – painting – is doing.

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty wants to return the painter to his world, as Carmen (2008) asserted, so that the painter can reveal the visual world, making it existent for the viewer. As Merleau-Ponty (1993) explained, the painter doesn't use his or her mind to paint; instead, he or she lends the body to the world in order to change this world into painting. For example, Johnson (1993) demonstrated the power of a painter, who does not just convey himself between the two worlds; rather, he also conveys the viewer to a place between the visible and invisible worlds by looking at his painting. A painter like Cezanne has a deep feeling or wide perspective that allows him to see what others could not see by recognizing the world around him. In other words, the

painter has a unique relationship to the act of perceiving, which helps him or her to reveal the hidden picture of the world, even if this bodily capacity is beyond that of the conscious mind. In sum, painting for Merleau-Ponty is a significant form of phenomenological research into the body and perception because it can bypass mental oversight.

Clearly, Merleau-Ponty (1993) emphasized that visual art, and especially painting, derives from the fundamental meaning of lived experience. However, Descartes reduced the importance of vision and painting, as Merleau-Ponty (1993) stated. Descartes's thought is in opposition to that of Merleau-Ponty; the latter's "philosophy of incarnate vision seeks to get at the open and spontaneous logos of the perceptual world," as Low (2000) highlighted, while "Descartes's philosophy seeks to intellectually construct vision from a few spatial (geometrical) indices" (p. 60). According to Low (2000), the conflict between the two ideas appears clearly in the opposite beliefs about vision; he said that "vision is no longer the precise vision of geometry. It is a vision that is itself a probing, a palpation, a vision that reveals a sense but that also always remains open, voluminous" (p. 63). Thus, even though "Descartes does not say much about painting," as Merleau-Ponty (1993, p. 132) mentioned, he was interested in neither the role of vision nor the role of painting.

Moreover, Merleau-Ponty (1993) stated that "Painting for him is not a central operation contributing to the definition of our access to Being; it is a mode or a variant of thinking, where thinking is canonically defined as intellectual possession and self-evidence" (p. 132). According to Merleau-Ponty (1993), Descartes ignored the significant function of the painting; instead, he focused more on the details and engravings of the painting. Merleau-Ponty (1993) believed modern painters were trying to ignore the abstract and geometrical interpretation of perception inherited from Descartes, and they used a different system of representation that was more

anchored in actual, lived experience rather than abstract geometry.

Merleau-Ponty (1993) explained the reason for avoiding the linear perspective by modern artists; he said, “But the painters knew from experience that no technique of perspective is an exact solution and that there is no projection of the existing world which respects it in all aspects” (p. 135). Low (2000) and Carman (2008) confirmed what Merleau-Ponty believed about the visual world, that it is rich with significant meaning. Merleau-Ponty (1993) explained how painting helps the viewer to see, clarifying, “Painting causes us to see, without real objects, just as we see things in everyday life; and in particular it makes us see empty space where there is none” (p. 133). Obviously, the painter helps the viewer to see the world around him or her by looking mindfully at the painting, which leads to developing sensorial, perceptual, embodied experience.

According to Carman (2008), painting teaches us how to see the world by organizing our perception; also, he mentioned that painting involves a group of carnal abilities that offer a field of potential actions and perceptions. The painting reflects the world around us, which incites our senses to look slowly and encourages our minds to think deeply about it. An interesting thought by Merleau-Ponty is that we see ‘with’ the work of art. The development of his own work points in the direction of a corporeal phenomenology which transcends the confines of our own subjectivity and selfhood—we open ourselves up to seeing with the work of art. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty’s study leads us to interesting ideas about the depth of encountering with a work of art that could affect the perception of the viewer in the case of transcendence of the self through the practice of mindfulness meditation. More recent scholars have taken up these insights in unique ways by using a pragmatic approach, which I introduce in the next section of this dissertation.

2.2.2 The Pragmatic Approach

I now explore a pragmatic study by Richard Shusterman that uses the analytic view of Merleau-Ponty to point the way toward soma-aesthetics, which provides the foundation for mindfulness practices. This study presents the pragmatic approach, the focal point of the combination between thoughts and the suggested practice, which focuses on the two practices, soma-esthetic and mindfulness meditation, as a potentially useful way to support educators and students in art education and museum education.

2.2.2.1 Soma-Esthetics

Richard Shusterman (1992, 1999, 2000, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015) inaugurated the discipline of soma-esthetics and somatic experience, which focuses on the role of bodily experience in aesthetic appreciation. Shusterman is the Dorothy F. Schmidt Eminent Scholar in the Humanities, Professor of Philosophy, and director of the Center for Body, Mind, and Culture at Florida Atlantic University. Shusterman is the author of numerous books, such as *Thinking Through the Body (*Cambridge, 2012), *Body Consciousness*: *A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge, 2008), *Performing Live* (2000), and *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (2000). Shusterman (2012) emphasized using disciplines of somatic training such as zazen, yoga, or the Alexander Technique to encourage both inner somatic experience and external somatic representations. His work is important to this study because he utilizes phenomenological insights to develop a pragmatic philosophy with the intent of improving our lives.

2.2.2.1.1 The Definition of Soma-Esthetics

Shusterman (2012) gave a concrete definition of somaesthetics that showed how his project narrows the gap between theory and practice:

> Somaesthetics, roughly defined, concerns the body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning. As an ameliorative discipline of both theory and practice, it aims to enrich not only our abstract, discursive knowledge of the body but also our lived somatic experience and performance; it seeks to enhance the understanding, efficacy, and beauty of our movements and improve the environments to which our movements contribute and from which they draw their energies and significance. (p. 27)

In addition to developing our discursive knowledge about our lived somatic experience, Shusterman (2006) pointed out the importance of somatic knowledge for enhancing our perception and performance in the art field and for developing our mastery in the highest level in art—the art of living a good life.

Shusterman's (2013) study highlighted that "Somaesthetics is related to the field of fine arts, though the scope of somaesthetics is indeed wider, extending into all practices of life in which we can enhance our perception and performance through improved somatic self-use and self-knowledge" (p. 7). Shusterman (2012) explained how artists use their bodies to create a work of art; also, viewers interact with art by using their bodily gestures to engage with the artwork. From the results of Shusterman's somatic project, we can recognize the importance of the body and senses as a way to engage in the visual art and understand how the body and the mind cooperate as a cohesive unit. Therefore, in my somatic mindfulness project (SMP), I observed how my participants interacted with visual art (artworks) and noted whether there were any differences between pre-meditation and post-meditation practices, which allowed me to discover at which level these practices affected their sensory experience.

Following upon Shusterman's definition of somaesthetics, other authors are also interested in studying his project and trying to understand how this project integrates theory and practice (Arnold, 2005; Crippen, 2014; Girel, 2015; Granger, 2010; Mattanen, 2010). For example, Arnold (2005) defined somaesthetics as being as concerned with "the idea of being a

person and living well as with the development of rational thought and the development of intellect" (p. 48). Girel (2015) called somaesthetics the embodiment of Shusterman's perfectionist pragmatism, which is the critical, ameliorative project of utilizing the body and experience as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation and creative self-fashioning. In this sense, Shusterman's project is deeply connected to a phenomenology of embodiment and, most explicitly, to aesthetics and to any educational project of appreciation and self-creation and self-fashioning.

2.2.2.1.2 The Key Features of the Soma-Esthetic Project

Shusterman (1992, 1999, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2013) identified three major branches of somaesthetics: the analytic, pragmatic, and practical disciplines. Shusterman (1999) describes analytic somaesthetics as "the basic nature of bodily perceptions and practices and also of their function in our knowledge and construction of reality" (p. 304). The second dimension is pragmatic somaesthetics, which "has a distinctly normative, prescriptive character by proposing specific methods of somatic improvement and engaging in their comparative critique" (p. 304). Thirdly, "practical somaesthetics is instead all about actually practicing such care through intelligently disciplined body work aimed at somatic self-improvement (whether in a representational, experiential, or performative mode)" (p. 307).

Shusterman (2000, 2008, 2012) developed two modes of pragmatic somaesthetics — representational and experiential. The representational (such as cosmetic) somaesthetics relates to the exterior of the body; in contrast, experiential (such as yoga) somaesthetics aims to enrich our somatic experiences with a sharper perspective. Shusterman (2011, 2012) illustrated the important point that all human style is somatic. Shusterman (2011) pointed out that somatic style goes not just with the tangible portion of the body's exterior; it also goes deeply to develop the

inner attitude of self and personality by using meditative practices. Clearly, Shusterman's work is important precisely because he rejects Cartesian dualisms through a unique blend of phenomenological insight into the body coupled with a pragmatic desire to improve action and aesthetic perception through specific bodily practices.

2.2.2.1.3 The Connection between Somaesthetics Theory and Meditation Practices

Shusterman (1999) recognized that physical training, which he referred to as a somatic training, as a fundamental instrument of philosophical enlightenment has a basis in Asian practices, such as Hatha Yoga, Zen meditation, and T'ai chi ch'uan. In addition to Asian practices, Shusterman (1999) elucidated the significance of Western body disciplines: The Alexander Technique, the Feldenkrais Method, and Bioenergetics. The end of meditation is "a mindful consciousness that is so fully absorbed in the reality of the moment that it no longer feels itself as separate from that reality" (Shusterman, 2012, p. 313). In fact, these practices aim to enhance the insight of awareness and to improve our senses by cultivating heightened attention and freeing us from negative bodily habits.

Furthermore, Shusterman (2012) noted that focusing on "living in the here and now by appreciating the present moment with vivid attention and clear consciousness is central to the Zen tradition" (p. 300). Importantly, Shusterman (2012) observed how one acquires an aesthetic experience by comparing the philosophical thoughts and the lived experience of meditation practices:

> Through such heightened, appreciative awareness and the mindfulness movements and actions that emerge from it, one can achieve extraordinary aesthetic experience in everyday living, as I learned not so much from philosophical readings as from personal experience during my training with a Zen master. (p. 302)

The idea of being 'here and now' is directly related to my somatic mindfulness project (SMP), which is connected to the practice of mindfulness meditation in the present moment of viewing

art. This project aims to help art education students, first, appreciate their bodies, and then appreciate artwork so that they might become more aware of the current moment by participating in guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing.

Shusterman (2006) provided instructions in a method that can help us to learn how to think and how to perfect our senses, which is the central goal of his philosophy – somatic self-knowledge. Shusterman (2012) pointed out that "Mindful somatic discipline is not meant to destroy the body but rather to raise it to a higher level" (p. 300). It is important to practice our bodies and senses, which are the means by which we develop our comprehension. Some methods to improve our thinking and develop our mind, as Shusterman (1992, 1999, 2006, 2008, 2012) proposed, are strengthening our body, meditation, and breathing. Shusterman (2012) argued that "Because breathing has a profound effect on our entire nervous system, by slowing or calming our breathing, we can bring greater tranquility to our minds" (p. 38). Shusterman (2012) emphasized this point: "Strengthening the body helps develop the mind, which it nourishes and informs through its senses" (p. 36). To turn again to my somatic mindfulness project (SMP), by comprehending self-use and self-knowledge of the body, art education students might understand how to appreciate a piece of artwork in a different way than simply glancing at it and moving on. Thus, these practices might help them to develop themselves so that they could achieve a more heightened body consciousness and sharper perception.

Shusterman (2012) conceptualized how somatic training could be a useful method to enhance self-consciousness and self-fashioning, which can be applied in the academic philosophical environment. He suggested a mindful exercise, called the body scan, including six strategies that help participants sharpen their attention and be aware of the present moment. Shusterman (2012) clarified the six strategies, which are 1) asking a variety of questions about an

object, 2) dividing the body into parts in our awareness, 3) contrasting feelings to get a sharper discrimination of what we feel, 4) associative interest, which Shusterman clarified as "attention to a bodily feeling by making its recognition a key to something we care about" (p. 121), 5) avoiding distracting interests by being conscious in the current moment and focusing on the object of study by performing practices that allow one to focus more, such as closing one's eyes, and 6) preperception. Shusterman clarified the last strategy in the following way: "One can prepare oneself to discriminate a feeling by conceptualizing where in one's felt body to look for it or by imagining how it will be induced and felt there" (p. 121). He asserted that both conceptualization and imagining include linguistic thought that can help in the somaesthetic process.

In addition, the body scan exercise and its six strategies are useful for my somatic mindfulness project (SMP). As I outline below, I have chosen guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing because it includes all the strategies outlined by Shusterman, especially narrative prompts, breathing, and closing of the eyes to assist my participants in concentrating deeply on a specific object in the current moment. Besides guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing, I have also found the phenomenological interview with my participants was a kind of meditative process that used the body scan exercise and its six strategies to help the participants be more aware of the present moment by asking them different questions about their perceptual and visual experience.

Moreover, I asked my participants some questions about their bodies/feelings and their minds/thoughts. I focused my questions in which part of their bodies they felt when they were practicing guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing. Then I asked them to compare between different parts of their bodies to get a sharper discrimination of what they felt. In my

questions, I tried to concentrate on what they cared about in their experience, if they cared more about their bodies, movement, breathing, or the artworks. Moreover, I considered how I could help my participants to focus on the present moment by employing some strategies, such as finding a quiet place for our interviews, assuming a comfortable sitting body position, and shifting their attention to the current experience. Through conceptualization and imagining their perceptual and visual experience when they were encountering the visual art, they might convey the self between the visible and invisible worlds to reveal the fundamental meaning of their perceptual and visual experience. In short, my methods, as I explain below, are fundamentally informed by Shusterman's approach.

2.2.2.1.4 Self and Meditation

Shusterman's (2011) somatic training deals not just with the exterior of the body; it also goes deeply into the development of the inner attitude of self and personality by using meditative practices persistently. Moreover, Shusterman (2012) was interested in the thought of Michel Foucault, who developed the idea of "limit-experience," or as he described it, an "experience of violent intensity." Shusterman (2012) explained:

> The value of these limit-experiences lies not simply in their experiential intensity that seems related to the intense sublimities of aesthetic experience but in their power to transform us by showing us the limits of our conventional experience and subjectivity and by introducing us to something fascinatingly powerful beyond those limits, an *au dela* of what we are and know. (p. 143)

In line with Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the depth of practicing and looking at the world, Shusterman (2012) confirmed the power of "limit-experience" to transform the self and challenge its confines of subjectivity and selfhood.

In addition, Shusterman (2012) asserted that there is a problem in our somaesthetic awareness such that "We often do not perceive these borders because our somaesthetic

awareness has not been sufficiently sharpened and sensitized to grasp them" (p. 144). I believe that, as Merleau-Ponty (1993) noted, we may not be able to recognize a work of art perceptually because our somatic perception is not sensitive and sharpened enough to understand it, but by using somatic mindfulness practices, we can develop our aesthetic perception and reveal the fundamental meaning of our visual and sensorial experience. According to Shusterman (2012), Foucault developed an idea of constructing the self in order to gain a better self by practicing. He pointed out that the significant role of the self-transcendental is that, as Shusterman (2012) asserted, the aim of the philosophical life is to be someone else, to master or empower the self through a transformative process of self-creation or self-fashioning. When encountering a piece of art, which leads to educating the self, the self changes its old habits of looking at art and achieves a new visual and perceptual experience. In the next section of this study, I present the second pragmatic approach, mindfulness meditation, giving a close description of various meditative traditions and explaining how this technique was used in my somatic mindfulness project (SMP).

2.2.2.2 Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness has been discussed theoretically and practically over many years by scholars, philosophers, educators, artists, scientists, neuroscientists, and psychologists (Ball, 2015; Bonura, Spadaro, & Thornton, 2016; Burrows, 2011; Butzer, Bury, Telles, & Khalsa, 2016; Capel, 2012; Garland, Carlson, Cook, Lansdell, & Speca, 2007; Harris, 2009; Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013; Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 1994, 2011; Kalmanowitz & Ho, 2016; Ludwig & Kabat-Zinn, 2008; Miller, 2015; Ott, 2004; Reid, 2009; Williams, 2011). According to Kabat-Zinn (1994), meditation is "the process by which we go about deepening our attention and awareness, refining them, and putting them to greater practical use in our lives" (p. 1). Ludwig and Kabat-

Zinn (2008) asserted that “Mindfulness refers to a meditation practice that cultivates present moment awareness” (p. 1350). They explained the function of mindfulness meditation practices: “Meditation practices, including mindfulness, have come to the attention of neuroscientists investigating consciousness and affect regulation through mental training and to psychotherapists interested in personal development and interpersonal relationship” (Ludwig & Kabat-Zinn, 2008, p. 1350). They identified the target of mindfulness meditation, which is “to maintain awareness moment by moment, disengaging oneself from strong attachment to beliefs, thoughts, or emotions, thereby developing a greater sense of emotional balance and well-being” (p. 1350). In addition, Harris (2009) highlighted that “‘mindfulness’ is an ancient concept, found in a wide range of spiritual and religious meditative traditions, including most martial arts, yoga, tai chi, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity” (p. 21). However, Ergas (2014a), Kabat-Zinn (1994, 2011), Ott (2004), and Reid (2009) have concluded that the origin of mindfulness practice comes from Buddhism.

The practice of looking at a work of art or images to engage in meditation has been used by many meditative traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sufism, and Judaism (Beckwith, 2014; Blume, n. d.; Carson, 2017; Davidson, 2016; Dellios, 2003; Fliegel, 2012; Gonzalez De leon, 2017; Grey, 2001; Howard, 2017; Joiner, 2015; Kelly, 2012; Kimball, 2003; Noble, 2017; Puff, 2013; Rezac, 2017; Schlosser, 2014; Shabout, 2007; Wecker, 2017). Even though these traditions have practiced looking at art as a kind of meditation, as Schlosser (2014) stated, “The meditative goals and methods in each of these traditions are different, including ideas such as the liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth to union with God” (para. 9). However, all these meditative traditions unite in one thought of how the self could transcend its subjectivity through the practice of looking at art as a kind of meditation.

In the next part of this section, I research the history and practice of looking at art or images as a way to engage in meditation, mindfulness, and/or contemplative engagement. I focus on various spiritual, religious, and philosophical traditions in Buddhist mandala meditation, Christian icon meditation, and memento mori contemplation. Also, I highlight the definition of meditation in each of these traditions and the importance of using certain kinds of art with meditation, focusing on how these traditions can inform my dissertation.

2.2.2.2.1 Buddhist Mandala Meditation

Mandalas have been studied over many years by scholars and philosophers (Beckwith, 2014; Blume, n. d.; Carson, 2017; Davidson, 2016; Dellios, 2003; Grey, 2001; LaPoint & King, 2016; McArthur, 2002; Soon, 2012; Thurman, 2006; Van Gordon, Shonin, & Garcia-Campayo, 2017). For instance, Blume (n. d.), Carson (2017), and Davidson (2016) pointed out the historical and geographical dimensions of mandalas. In particular, Blume (n. d.) studied the origin of mandala art and the founder of this type of art; she wrote:

> Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was born in what is today Nepal in 563 B.C.E. While we know that his followers spread the message of Enlightenment after his death, the presence of Buddhist art is often the earliest proof of the existence of Buddhism in a given place. (para. 5)

Furthermore, Blume (n. d.) stated that mandalas have continued to serve one of the greatest religions in the world, Buddhism; she also pointed out different nations that have used mandala art, stating that mandalas have appeared in "Tibet, India, Nepal, China, Japan, Bhutan, and Indonesia and date from the 4th century to present. Now they are created throughout the world, including New York City" (Blume, n. d., para. 3). Moreover**,** Carson (2017) and Davidson (2016) highlighted the different cultures that have practiced the use of mandalas in religion, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Native American, and Australian Aboriginal, as icons of the cosmos and wholeness. In the next part of this section, I focus on the meaning of the term "mandala."

Many scholars and philosophers have discussed the meaning of the term mandala **(**Beckwith, 2014; Blume, n. d.; Carson, 2017; Davidson, 2016; Dellios, 2003; Grey, 2001; LaPoint & King, 2016; McArthur, 2002; Soon, 2012; Thurman, 2006; Van Gordon et al., 2017). For example, Blume (n. d.) defined mandalas as objects of Buddhist religious traditions that have used the icons to represent the perfect universe. However, Carson (2017) gave a wider overview of the mandala related to all religions and to the universe also, stating that "The mandala is one of humankind's most ancient art forms. With the circle as its basis, it reflects eternity and all of nature. Types of mandalas may be found in all religions, as well as in psychology" (para. 1). The mandala has a deep meaning as its circle, which is a central point of the mandala art, relates to the universe.

According to Carson (2017), "The circle is the most natural form known to mankind" (para. 3), representing various round-shaped objects, such as the moon, the sun, flowers, and parts of plants. Carson (2017) and Davidson (2016) related the origin of the word mandala to the ancient Sanskrit word meaning circle. Mandala art, as Davidson (2016) emphasized, has a deep meaning and an inner vision focused not on depicting details and engraving, but instead on making the spirit transcend from an unconscious state to consciousness. In the next part of this study, I highlight the practice of looking at art or images as a way to engage in meditation by focusing on Buddhist mandala meditation.

Mandala art reflects all nature, returning us to the world and to humankind, which is originally related to the ontology of Being (Beckwith, 2014; Blume, n. d.; Carson, 2017; Davidson, 2016; Dellios, 2003; Grey, 2001; LaPoint & King, 2016; McArthur, 2002; Soon, 2012; Thurman, 2006; Van Gordon et al., 2017). For example, LaPoint and King (2016) demonstrated the importance of mandala art as related to the ontology of Being, revealing *who I*

am in the world by showing our relationship with other objects. LaPoint and King (2016) explained the reversibility between the mandala and individuals, including the dualism between the subject and the object; they said that “This relationship, between mandala and individual, therefore governs not only the range of possible actions, but also the sense of self that is produced as a result of those actions” (LaPoint and King, 2016, p. 46). Moreover, creating a mandala is a spontaneous process that reflects your emotions, feelings, and challenges which you encounter in your life, to reveal the experience without judgment or criticism, as Davidson (2016) explained. According to LaPoint and King (2016), looking at mandala art can educate the viewer and develop his consciousness of the world around him.

Moreover, LaPoint and King (2016) demonstrated the benefits of using the mandala, which aid in the construction of the self between worlds; they said that “Any engagement with the mandala, then, fundamentally contributes to the construction and negotiation of worlds, whether by dedicating oneself to the ritual practice, or by adding dimensions to one’s global awareness through recognizing the worlds of others” (p. 46). Carson (2017) and Davidson (2016) pointed out the significant role of making mandala art, which is to help the individual to understand the world around him or her regarding the sense of inner self. Therefore, Mandala art may help the viewer to look deeply and think mindfully, which leads to supporting the self in transcending its subjectivity by carrying out actions such as the practice of mindfully looking at a work of mandala art. By practicing mandala art, the viewer or the participator will understand who he or she is in the world through practicing mandala as a kind of meditation, which will lead the practitioner to reveal the depth of visual and perceptual experience.

According to Soon (2012), mandala art reflects the universe according to a spiritual and philosophical system, and he described the three wheels of time in the Kalachakra sand mandala.

The first wheel is related to the concept of time that allows us to measure the outer world; the second one is related to the body, breathing, and emotion; and the third wheel attempts to refine the external and internal Kalachakras. Moreover, Soon (2012), Davidson (2016), and Carson (2017) confirmed the philosophical basis of the sand mandala—its fashioning and destroying—as a focal point to our comprehension of the artwork instead of the significance of achieving the final production of sand mandala art. Thus, this is an important thought of achieving the depth of the perceptual experience without thinking about the details and focusing on how a work of art could deepen the self mindfully and educate individuals in how they see the world.

Many scholars have discussed the connection between mandala art and meditation **(**Blume, n. d.; Carson, 2017; Davidson, 2016; LaPoint & King, 2016; McArthur, 2002; Soon, 2012). Carson (2017) stated that mandala is a type of meditation practice originated in the East. Likewise, Davidson (2016) noted an important idea, that the mandala could help the individual in several ways, saying that "Mandala art has been used throughout the world for self-expression, meditation, spiritual transformation, and personal growth" (Davidson, 2016, para. 18). Mandala art as a kind of meditation could assist the viewer to unfold emotions and feelings, which leads to development of the self, so as to become free from limitations that prevent it from experiencing the fundamental meaning of the visual and sensorial experience.

Besides Carson (2017) and Davidson (2016), Blume (n. d.) described how mandala art could help a meditator; for example, Blume (n. d.) stated that "It can also be used as an aid to meditation, helping the meditator to envision how to achieve the perfect self" (para. 2). Through looking at mandala art, the viewer can understand the relationship between himself and the world around him or her, which is like a mirror that reflects the reversibility between the subject and the object, as Merleau-Ponty (1993) explained. The philosophy of mandala practice could help

us understand how a particular kind of art could allow the self to be able to transform between the visible world and the invisible world by supporting the individual's effort to transcend the subjectivity of the self.

In sum, the art mandala does not focus on the final production of the visual experience; rather, it focuses on the fundamental meaning of the lived personal experience. Importantly, Gestalt psychology plays a significant role in mandala meditation as the person meditating focuses on a whole rather than merely parts. In the somatic mindfulness project (SMP), I was able to understand the importance of focusing on the materials or the techniques that the artists used because this helped the participants engage in the meditative mood in order to discover the fundamental meaning of their visual and perceptual experience. Now, after having presented a description of Buddhist mandala meditation, I turn to the history of Christian icon meditation and the practice of meditation involving looking at art or images.

2.2.2.2.2 Christian Icon Meditation

The history of Christian icon meditation and the practice of looking at art as a kind of meditation is an important topic that has been discussed by authors and researchers (Fliegel, 2012; Howard, 2017; Joiner, 2015; Kimball, 2003; Paradis, 2017; Rohr, 2016; Roosevelt, n. d.; Vanheusen, 2016; Wahba, 1993**)**. According to the Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.), Orthodox Christian culture supported its own artistic traditional styles, especially icons that were depicted in a Western style. Thus, icons are an important part in the church for preaching and praying, as stated by the Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.). The icon provides a more distinctive formal aesthetic for Byzantine art, as Fliegel (2012) showed; also, he highlighted this point: "the icon was the genre through which the devices and compositions of antique portraiture were transmitted through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Icons were the defining force of

Byzantine art" (p. 24). Fliegel (2012) pointed out that the usage of these icons focuses on religious veneration and the strong relationship between the holy personality and his image, and how the icons create both negative and positive responses. Howard (2017) agreed with Fliegel (2012), saying that the goal of icon meditation is not appreciation of the art work aesthetically; instead, it should go further from the artistic thought to develop the spiritual senses. In my view, the aim of icon meditation covers different aspects, including those spiritual, religious, philosophical, artistic, etc. In the next part of this study, I focus more on the meaning of the term "icon."

Icon meditation is an important concept that many researchers have discussed (Fliegel, 2012; Howard, 2017; Joiner, 2015; Kimball, 2003; Paradis, 2017; Rohr, 2016; Roosevelt, n. d.; Vanheusen, 2016; Wahba, 1993**)**. The meaning of the word "icon" is the image; however, in the early centuries of Christianity, the term "icon" denoted an image with a religious subject, meaning, and use; these objects include two-dimensional and three-dimensional icons with different kinds of visual art, such as mosaics, paintings, enamels, and miniatures, as stated by the Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.). Moreover, Fliegel (2012) pointed out that these "icons were made of virtually any material, including ivory, soapstone, and various precious and semiprecious gemstones" (p. 27). Kimball (2003) provided more details about the characteristics of these icons; she stated that most of these icons illustrated different images of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, angels and saints, church leaders, bishops, and evangelists. Next, I highlight the practice of looking at art or images as a way to engage in meditation by focusing on Christian icon meditation.

Icons have a deep value that many authors and researchers have investigated (Fliegel, 2012; Howard, 2017; Joiner, 2015; Kimball, 2003; Paradis, 2017; Rohr, 2016; Roosevelt, n. d.;

Vanheusen, 2016; Wahba, 1993). The Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.) reported on the important role of icons to decorate the walls of churches and worship places; moreover, icons have purposeful functions, such as teaching, challenging, witnessing, sanctifying, and uniting people. For example, the Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.) highlighted the worth of icons by focusing on the idea that icons remind us "what we are and what we should be. They show us the importance of matter and of material things. They show us the transfiguration of matter under the power of the Holy Spirit" (para. 10). Icons let us think mindfully by asking ourselves who we are in the world, which leads us to the ontology of Being. Through the practice of looking at icons, we can understand who we are and who others are and try to compare others with ourselves. The Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.) explained how icons give a clear understanding of the meaning of the reversibility between the subject and object. Icons have a real power that affects the viewer's perception in the case of transcendence of the self so that it can see the invisible world and achieve more potentials between different worlds by letting the viewer connect with Christ and/or the saints mindfully.

From this point of view, I want to explore the importance of the subject and the deep meaning of the icon through which it helps the self to meditate. The subject of the icon is important in that it gives the viewer the desire to pose more questions that open more possibilities for him. For instance, Rochester Arts in Mission (2016) and the Orthodox Church of Estonia (n. d.) explained how the icon could help the viewer to ask more questions about Christ and lead to the arousing of his senses to see the invisible world. Moreover, Howard (2017) and Kimball (2003) emphasized the power of the image that can educate the viewer and develop his or her perceptual experience to reveal the fundamental meaning that lets the eye move deeply in order to discover the unseen reality of the world, as a process of practicing meditation. In

addition, Rochester Arts in Mission (2016) explained the significance of the role of the painter, who helps the viewer to transmit the self to the invisible world and see what Christ or Mary tells him or her, which reflected the important role of the painter to convey the world. It is a stage of meditation that starts when the icon induces us to challenge ourselves and ask more questions. The icon attracts our attentions and lets our eyes move around some of its parts in order to be in a meditative mood and reach a higher level of consciousness.

Meditation affects not just the outer attitude of the body but also the inner attitude of our bodies, which helps us to go further by developing our perceptual and visual experience to appreciate a piece of art. According to Paradis (2017), “Meditation suggests sustained contact with the deeper layers of reality, a careful surveying of the unseen but real context in which we live our lives” (para. 1). Meditation is a way to transform the self into the unseen world so that the viewer can refine his or her senses to be aware of the world around him. Moreover, Joiner (2015) noticed the importance of being mindful to control our thoughts, which could affect the actions of our bodies. Through meditation, the individual can clear his mind from distractions that prevent him from seeing the secret of the visible world. In the somatic mindfulness project (SMP), the individuals (participants) practiced guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing before encountering visual artworks so that they could bracket their thoughts and feelings in order to pay more attention and appreciate a work of art.

Howard (2017) and Roosevelt (n. d.) suggested some strategies to practice icon meditation; for example, they stated the importance of selecting which icon is suitable for meditation by considering a place for the icon that is more comfortable for the viewer while simultaneously providing appropriate light. In addition, Roosevelt (n. d.) highlighted the importance of selecting a good place for the viewer to engage in meditation practices.

However, in the somatic mindfulness project (SMP), I did not ask my participants to look at specific artworks because I wanted them to have a freedom to engage naturally in the exhibition setting without any intervention from outside, even from the researcher; the reason for this choice was to help the meaning of the phenomenon appear as it is. Furthermore, Roosevelt (n. d.) offered more suggestions for the viewer to engage mindfully with the icon, that he or she should choose comfortable clothing, clear the mind from any thoughts, and try to engage other senses in the meditative process, such as by using candles or incense, to help engage in the meditative mood. These are some techniques that might help my participants to bracket their feelings and thoughts in order to project the self in the meditative mood.

Howard (2017) suggested that "It may help, if you return to a particular icon again, to learn about the symbols represented in the various elements of the painting (clothing, colors, words, poses and so on)" (para. 5). However, I agreed with Howard regarding looking at the elements of the painting. In my somatic mindfulness project (SMP), it was effective to let my participants engage in the meditative process by spending more time looking carefully at the details (the materiality of the artwork, how it is composed, the social and cultural meaning, possible new uses, etc.) of the artworks that might help them discover the essence of their visual and sensorial experience. Having described Christian icon meditation, I now focus on the history of memento mori contemplation and the practice of looking at art or images as a method of engaging in meditation.

2.2.2.2.3 Memento Mori Contemplation

The history of the memento mori contemplation is an important theme, and many studies and certain online resources from museums and popular publications have discussed this tradition (Gonzalez De leon, 2017; Mckay & Mckay, 2012; Noble, 2017; Rezac, 2017;

Wecker, 2017). For example, Mckay and Mckay (2012), Gonzalez De leon, (2017), Rezac (2017), and Philosophy for Life (2009) discussed the origin of the phrase memento mori, tracing it to the ancient Roman empire when the victorious generals returned after battle and commanded slaves to follow them; the servants whispered "memento mori," which means "Look behind you! Remember that you will die!" (Mckay & Mckay, 2012, para. 2). The history of memento mori contemplation reflects an important thought related to the relationship between the slave and master, which relates to the reversibility between the subject and the object in the world.

According to Gonzalez De leon (2017), the concept of remembering death, which is called "memento mori" in the Roman Christian tradition, is rooted in many cultures. For example, Gonzalez De leon (2017) pointed out that in addition to the different ways of representing the memento mori in the Americas and Mexico, the expression of death in Islamic, Buddhist, and Samurai aesthetics, has particular variations also. Rezac (2017) asserted that meditation on death, or "memento mori contemplation," existed before the Roman empire. Gonzalez De leon (2017) described how this tradition has affected the Western cultures: "The aesthetic that emerged from this legend and its ontological implications deeply touched Western culture and flourished particularly since the 17th century, during an era of deep religiosity" (para. 3). Moreover, Gonzalez De leon (2017) discussed how Christianity, which cares more about the spiritual world than earthly world, adopted memento mori. In the next part of this section, I focus more on the meaning of the term memento mori.

Many scholars have focused on the religious theme connected to the memento mori (Gonzalez De leon, 2017; Mckay & Mckay, 2012; Noble, 2017; Rezac, 2017; Wecker, 2017). According to Rezac (2017), the memento mori is a visual religious subject which is related to a

genre of art, music, and literature. To illustrate, Noble (2017) provided a clear definition of the meaning of memento mori: “Visual reminders — often called memento mori, the Latin phrase for ‘Remember that you will die’ — are one way we can keep our impending death in mind” (para. 9). As Noble (2017), Gonzalez De leon, (2017), and Wecker (2017) stated, the memento mori is an artistic genre, which is often portrayed in classic paintings, drawings, and sculptures in decoration with marble or ceramic skulls and skeletons. From this point of view, the memento mori is related to ontology as it embodies the deep meaning of the presence of the skull and skeleton in the work of art, symbols that reveal the finitude of our Being. It is important to remember that for Heidegger, the question of death induces the ultimate reflection on the question of Being (the meaning of our existence).

Furthermore, Mckay and Mckay (2012) focused on two genres of memento mori art, the first of which is the Dance of Death, which originated in the late medieval times and became more popular in the Renaissance. This sub-genre of memento mori art depicts skeletons involved in various actions: walking, dancing, or playing music, as Mckay and Mckay (2012) noted. Vanitas art is another sub-genre of memento mori, as Mckay and Mckay (2012) stated; the main theme of vanitas art centers on death, including different symbols such as the skull, bubbles, smoke, hourglasses, watches, rotting fruit and flowers, musical instruments and music sheets, torn or loose books, and dice and playing cards. Having described what, the memento mori is, I now highlight the practice of looking at art or images to engage in meditation by focusing on memento mori contemplation.

Many studies have discussed the importance of memento mori (Gonzalez De leon, 2017; Mckay & Mckay, 2012; Noble, 2017; Rezac, 2017; Wecker, 2017). Memento mori contemplation helps individuals to remember death and that “one day I will die,” as Noble (2017,

para. 11) asserted, but this meditation practice also has the power to help the meditator imagine Christ Jesus with him. Moreover, besides reminding the viewer of death, these paintings of skulls and skeletons induce the individual to avoid wasting his time and begin his new life in the way that he wants, as Mckay and Mckay (2012) clarified. Noble (2017) pointed out that "The skull on my desk reminds me every day that I will die and that my Savior has transformed death into a doorway to new life" (para. 12). The skull reminds me of the deep meaning of the mirror by Merleau-Ponty (1993). As I have explained, the mirror is the convergence point between the two worlds, or the moment of switching the role between the subject and object. The skull plays the same role as the mirror, as it transforms the self of the meditator, enabling him or her to see the invisible life of Christ or Mary.

Therefore, Mckay and Mckay (2012) highlighted the significant role of the painter of memento mori art, which helps the viewer who does not like to think too much about death. Also, Mckay and Mckay (2012) pointed out how the artist helps the viewer to meditate on death. The practice of looking at a work of art as a kind of meditation is an effective way to overcome the fear of thinking about death and the finitude of Being. Moreover, besides looking mindfully at a work of art, the individual might overcome his fear of thinking about death by practicing somatic mindfulness meditation before encountering visual art to help him reach a mood of consciousness in order to recognize the two worlds. Having provided a foundation for the theoretical/analytical and pragmatic approaches to the phenomenology of the body and somaesthetics, I discuss in the next section some studies that have used sensorial practices and mindfulness meditation practices in education, art education, and museum education.

2.2.3 The Practical Approach

I introduce two practices, somaesthetics and mindfulness meditation, which could aid

educators and students in art education and museum education settings, leading to enriched learning and teaching processes. First, I focus on different studies that incorporate phenomenology of the body into art education and museum education. Then I look at studies of the use of mindfulness meditation with art education and museum education.

2.2.3.1 Incorporating Phenomenology of the Body into General Education, Art Education, and Museum Education

Applying somaesthetics and embodied phenomenology in an educational environment could lead to further development of the learning and teaching process and support educators and students. First, I focus on some studies that relate to phenomenology of the body in education. Then I discuss other studies using phenomenology of the body in art education and museum education in order to clarify how sensorial practices could play a positive role in assisting educators and students.

2.2.3.1.1 Sensorial Practices in General Education

Some studies have discussed the significant task of the body and senses in education (Ergas, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Fendler, 2012; Power, 2009; Vlieghe, Simons, & Masschelein, 2010; Vlieghe, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b). For instance, Vlieghe (2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b) confirmed that the body has an important value in the pedagogical classroom, while the current perspective does not consider the meaningful worth of the body. Moreover, Vlieghe and his colleagues (2010) recognized a problem in relation to the experience of laughter in education today. They inferred that even though laughter has strong effects in educational activities, it is not a beneficial practice for improving learning and teaching processes as they are described in policy and practices. If we take seriously what we experience when we laugh, we notice that our bodies are no longer productive or susceptible to power

arrangements that want to make the body productive. Laughter makes the body appear, and is therefore similar to the work of art in Merleau-Ponty's writings. Both laughter and visual arts make the body and its capacities for sensory experience appear.

Fendler (2012) pointed out that tasting skills are absent from the school curriculum, thus negating an important sensorial component of lived experience. From Fendler's study, it is clear that art educators should not impose any hierarchy among the senses; rather, all senses are important for students to gain perceptual experience. For this reason, I encourage art education students to understand their bodies and senses by practicing mindfulness meditation so that they can improve their sensory experience and appreciate works of art in a more educationally deep and enriching way.

2.2.3.1.2 Sensorial Practices in Art Education

Many philosophers and scholars have demonstrated the important function of engaging the senses in the art classroom (Duncum, 1999, 2012; Ellsworth, 2005; Garcia & Lewis, 2014; Gershon, 2011; Gradle, 2011; Greene, 1977; Hartjen, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Jasinski & Lewis, 2015; Jeffers, 2009; Kalin & Barney, 2014; Laban, 2014; Lankford, 1984; Lewis, 2013, 2015, 2016; D. Madenfort, 1973; W. J. Madenfort, 1972; Montgomery-Whicher, 1997; Proweller, 1973; Shauck, 2017; Springgay, 2005, 2008). Some scholars have noted the affective task of art educators in the classroom (Duncum, 2012; Ellsworth, 2005; Greene, 1977; Hartjin, 2012; Hubard, 2007; Jasinski & Lewis, 2015; Lewis, 2013; Springgay, 2005, 2008). For example, Greene (1977) noted that art educators could support their students by creating more opportunities for them to use their senses to move into an imaginative mode of awareness. Greene (1977) asked teachers to be sensitive to the quality of things, such as works of art, but she did not suggest how educators could be sensitive and help their students to be sensitive too.

Lewis (2013) has explained how educators can give their students the space of freedom to gain new pleasure in education so that students can develop studious perceptions, which are perceptions that find value in the experiences themselves, in the present, without reference to future outcomes.

Recently, Duncum (2012) suggested that art educators ought to adopt “senses beyond sight” (p. 183), and he mentioned three popular assumptions about the senses which create new directions for art educators. First, he argued that there is no exhaustive list of the number of senses. Second, he noted that the importance of the senses to knowledge is determined by the needs of different cultures, which tend to emphasize some senses over others. Third, he stated that the senses do not work individually, but operate in an interrelated way and are incorporated together. After the role of art educators to support students, the educational curriculum counts as the second most important component for achieving the goal of learning and teaching processes.

According to Laban (2014), the great value of eurhythmic education, a good education, is to help students become open to more possibilities and challenges by using their senses. D. Madenfort (1973) pointed out an example of a good education which develops students’ ability to experience the immediacy of sensuous phenomena in the art classroom, which is aesthetic education. However, W. J. Madenfort (1972) argued that the main problem aesthetic education addresses by allowing for the development of students’ openness to the unity between their living bodies and the world is that the separation between ourselves as subject and the world as object is mediated through symbols and concepts, which relates to the Descartes’ philosophy of dualism between the subject and the object. Further, W. J. Madenfort (1972) encouraged readers to discover the body as a spatial phenomenon and to learn a new sense of what it means to have a body instead of understanding the body as a solid material object.

Besides Laban (2014), D. Madenfort (1973), and W. J. Madenfort (1972), who have discussed the need for the integration of sensory practices into the art classroom, Gershon (2011) suggested opening a new direction in curriculum studies by calling attention to sensory studies. The sensual curriculum is based on perceiving the senses as a kind of embodied experience and not as a set of common sensory perceptions (Gershon, 2011). Moreover, Ellsworth (2005) proposed a new pedagogy of sensation which rejects the Cartesian idea of deemphasizing the importance of the body and sensations, while it confirms the effectiveness of the body's movements and feelings to develop our comprehension of the world.

Springgay (2008) described possibilities for experiencing new pleasures in the art classroom through her pedagogical philosophy, which adopted the challenges of *thinking through the body*. Springgay (2008) stated that "Lessons and class explorations were not intended to instruct students about bodies, or about particular techniques, rather art became a means through which students could think through and negotiate the lived experiences of their bodies" (p. 16). Student learning should be the first goal in the pedagogical process; to achieve this goal, art educators should play a significant role to support their students by focusing more on using their bodies and senses in the art classroom.

2.2.3.1.3 Sensorial Practices in Museum Education

There are many authors and scholars who have studied the importance of using a sensory curriculum in museum education (Brewster, 2005; Classen, 2007; Estep, 2012; Garoian, 2001; Hornecker, 2008; Hubard, 2007; Hughes & Moscardo, 2017; Naumova, 2015; Nordlund, 2016; R. C. Roberts, 2013; Wood & Latham, 2011). Garoian (2001) emphasized the importance of performative museum pedagogy, which is an embodied pedagogy, creating an inclusive discourse and practice in museums by making viewers enter a dialogic relationship, such as

perceptual dialogue, between the subjects and objects. In addition, Wood and Latham (2011) stated that using phenomenological touch as part of the curriculum in the museum could open a path for appreciation and awareness of the lifeworld through different transactions with objects, which stimulate the senses by recalling memory, allowing new perception to be gained, and awakening the consciousness.

Similar to the work of Wood and Latham (2011), Naumova (2015) illustrated the implications of person-object transactions, which are related to phenomenological research, currere. Wood and Latham (2011) and Naumova (2015) clarified the idea of person-object transactions, which lets students connect with their individual lifeworld experiences by promoting their senses and feelings when holding the objects. In my view, this kind of practice involves mindful practice too by asking students to have an inner dialogue with the object, which makes a connection between the mind and the body in the immediacy of the moment; it is one of the mindfulness meditation methods suggested by Hornich-Lisciandro (2013).

In sum, our environment is rich with different images which help students to open their senses and discover the world around them. Therefore, I encourage art educators and museum educators to integrate the sensorial curriculum into the pedagogy so that they can help students to develop their sensory experiences. In the next section, I provide a clearer understanding of the second practice, the concept of mindfulness, which can be used in general education, art education, and museum education to improve the experiences of both students and educators.

2.2.3.2 Incorporating Mindfulness into General Education, Art Education, and Museum Education

The use of mindfulness meditation in the educational field is an important practice for educators and students who understand the different techniques and practices of meditation. In this section, I describe different ways of using mindfulness meditation in general education, art

education, and museum education by focusing on how meditation practices could support educators in their efforts to help students understand how they can appreciate their bodies.

2.2.3.2.1 Mindfulness Meditation Practices in General Education

Mindfulness practice is an important topic for educators and students in the academic setting (Burrows, 2011; Butzer et al., 2016; Capel, 2012; Ergas, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013; Martin & Ergas, 2016; Miller, 2015; Ott, 2004; van de Weijer-Bergsma, Formsma, de Bruin, & Bogels, 2012; Zylowska et al., 2008). Educators focus on how to help students to organize their lives, but they don't focus on helping them to organize their feelings and overcome their anxieties, as Hornich-Lisciandro (2013) pointed out. These problems can be handled by encouraging students to use mindfulness processes in education. The method of using mindfulness is not new, although it is new to the educational field (Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013). Capel (2012) stated that the most important aspect of the learning process should be the individual child, who is often neglected. Capel (2012) explained how mindfulness aids teachers:

> Mindfulness helps the teacher to become more conscious and more involved in the moment to moment activities and to increase awareness, enhancing personal development as well as teacher's opportunities to meet individual needs of students. Also, when teachers can see things from different perspectives, classroom management and duties become less a routine but become endless opportunities for growth and development, and for improving the overall quality of learning process and outcomes. (p. 677)

In addition, Miller (2015) suggested a new model of deep listening as a practice for educators to refine their proficiency over the long term and to become more skillful educators with their students. Like Miller, Burrows (2011) introduced a mindfulness process to promote listening deeply to the self and others and to build a relaxing, supportive, and nonjudgmental context in which educators are ready to engage in open conversations about their own experiences of mindfulness practices.

Furthermore, Capel (2012), Hornisch-Lisciandro (2013), van de Weijer-Bergsma et al. (2012), and Zylowska et al. (2008) concluded that mindfulness would be a helpful tool to increase focus and reduce anxiety for people who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). By practicing mindful processes in the classroom, students will learn how to think in a different way in order to concentrate on the present moment and to slow down their thoughts, listen, concentrate, communicate, and become more effective students (Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013). In mindful learning, teachers and students understand that they can use a set of perspectives to discover new information and open up more possibilities, which has the potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

In addition, some authors have suggested different mindfulness methods that educators can use in the classroom (Ball, 2015; Butzer et al., 2016; Hornich-Lisciandro, 2013; Ott, 2004; Shusterman, 2012). For example, Hornich-Lisciandro (2013), Ott (2004), and Shusterman (2012) discussed how body scan, mindful eating, and observing and counting our breaths are effective practices for students. All these practices emphasize overcoming mind and body dualisms to promote an integrated, holistic sense of self. In addition, Hornich-Lisciandro (2013) discussed other practices that make a connection between the mind and the body through the use of external objects. For instance, he suggested that educators can ask students to pass around an object that requires attention to keep it in the same state, and they can ask students to focus on an object that is presented to them by paying more attention and being quiet.

Ball (2015) and Ott (2004) described mindful walking with breathing practice, another form of mindfulness meditation. Walking practice meditation is designed to improve mindfulness of physical movement and raise the practitioner to an advanced level of awareness of embodied consciousness with precise intertwining between mind and body (Ball, 2015).

Furthermore, Butzer et al. (2016) and Ott (2004) suggested mindful yoga meditation. Butzer et al. (2016) pointed out how using yoga, as a holistic system of mind-body training, could help participants corporeally and rationally by integrating different aspects of practice, such as physical awareness, breathing, relaxation, and mindful meditation exercises.

2.2.3.2.2 Mindfulness Meditation Practices in Art Education

Studies have documented the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation in art education (Chung, 2011; Costantion, 2005; Gradle, 2011; Kohler, 2012; Montgomery-Whicher, 1997; Patterson, 2015; Rohloff, 2008; Shauck, 2017). Aiming to increase the role of mindful artistic experiences in the classroom, Patterson (2015) created a mindfulness training program for general elementary teacher candidates (TCs) to increase the benefits of mindful artistic experiences in the classroom. Specifically, the goals of the training program are to decrease TC's fear of art, remove their misconceptions about art, provide the TCs with successful activities related to viewing and creating art, and offer tools they can use in the classroom. Patterson confirmed that mindfulness art-making programs help TCs to be freer from outside stress, enriching their awareness, motivations, understanding of their feelings, and self-confidence.

Kohler (2012) explored how mindful awareness practices, such as yoga (which is a mind-body practice), can improve the art-making process for adult learners. Kohler stated that an assumption of the study was that art education can teach mindful creativity to offer a new path for appreciating art. He concluded that by interconnecting the mind and body, students can achieve more mindful awareness, knowledge, relaxation, reduced stress, and appreciation for art. By engaging students in different mindfulness activities in the classroom, art educators can support students physically, mentally, and spiritually.

2.2.3.2.3 Mindfulness Meditation Practices in Museum Education

The theme of meditation is an important topic, and many studies and some online resources from museum and popular publications have discussed incorporating meditation into museum education (Chung, 2011; Costantion, 2005; Estep, 2012; Ferreira, 2015; Heyn, 2015; Hughes & Moscardo, 2017; J. L. Roberts, 2013; R. C. Roberts, 2013; Rohloff, 2008; Rosenbloom, 2014). An article by the Center for the Future of Museums (2013) indicated that mindfulness meditation is important in allowing the museum's staff and visitors to engage together. Some visitors said that looking at art as a kind of mindful meditation was a meaningful experience, and others said walking meditation made them pay more attention to the present moment. The Birmingham Museum of Art (2014) argued for the benefits of meditation, specifically that meditation can help participants to slow down, get to know themselves better, feel calm, strengthen their mind, and experience something new.

Many authors and schools have focused on the importance of looking at a work of art in the museum setting (Barry & Meisiek, 2010; Clothier, 2012; Dustin & Ziegler, 2005; Gambis, 2015; Heyn, 2015; Jasani & Saks, 2013; Mercer, 2017; Morse, 2011; Murawski, 2014; Patterson, 2015; Rosenbloom, 2014; Scully, 2017; Shimamura, 2014; Trop, 2014; Walton, 2012). For example, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (n. d.) asserted that "Beholding exercises change the ways in which we see the world, enhancing one of the primary means through which we interact with the world: sight" (para. 1). The beholding program was created by a professor of Visual Arts and Art History at Holy Cross, Joanna Ziegler. Her pedagogy focused on repetition of looking at the same painting in the same time and same place every day to recognize any change in the painting and in the self (the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, n. d.). Ziegler agreed with Shusterman (2006) in giving more value to the lived experience than to the

knowledge of thought. For instance, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (n. d.) stated that Ziegler asked the participants to take notes when encountering artwork and to describe their experience, somatically, perceptually, and emotionally with other participants in order to reveal the essential meaning of this experience.

Furthermore, Morse (2011), Trop (2014), Mercer (2017) Shimamura (2014), and Clothier (2012) agreed that some visitors do not know how to look at art, and they just walk by quickly. Heyn (2015), Morse (2011), Trop (2014), and Shimamura (2014) recommended a program that teaches museumgoers how to look at a work of art slowly, called Slow Art Day. Slow looking is "the process of dissecting a single image or artistic object detail-by-detail with your students" (Heyn, 2015, para. 3). The techniques of the slow looking program start with asking participants to look at a piece of art for five minutes and take notes about their experience. Then they share their visual and perceptual experience with others and discuss what they have seen and learned from the slow looking session.

Trop (2014) demonstrated how a slow looking session helps visitors to be relaxed and pay more attention to noticing details in viewed images. Trop (2014) and Clothier (2012) ascribed more value to moving the eye to see the painting and moving the body to recognize different angles of the painting, which leads to affecting the way that the viewer experiences a work of art visually and perceptually. According to Clothier (2012), slow looking will open more potentiality and challenges in relation to a new experience that will surprise the viewer, who will learn more knowledge that refines his thinking and perception. Moreover, besides slow looking, Clothier (2012) demonstrated how walking mindfully is significant for the viewer to get special pleasure and insights; he stated that

> If we want to 'see' the object as it is intended, we must move; we must look at it from every direction and notice how volumes, surfaces and angles shift and change, along with

color and texture, light and shadow. (p. 86)

Walking mindfully and looking slowly at a work of art are very important practices that inform my own study, helping me to understand how meditation practices affect the aesthetic appreciation of the visual art. In my project, I avoided asking my participants to look at particular artworks; instead, I wanted them to look and walk freely without any interference from the outside that might distract them to engage in the meditative mood and reveal the fundamental meaning of the visual and perceptual experience.

2.3 Summary

Many scholars have discussed the problems with Cartesian theory, which aimed to reduce the importance of sensations and body, and they confirmed the effectiveness of integrating the body and the mind in education today. Shusterman developed an ameliorative pragmatic study that is concerned with the function of bodily experience in aesthetic appreciation in the theoretical and practical approaches to the rehabilitation of the philosophical view of best mindfulness for the lived body. Although Shusterman talked about mindfulness meditation and breathing in his study, he did not talk about how to practically incorporate them into art education and museum education studies. Moreover, some practical research has focused on sensorial practices and mindfulness practices in art education and museum education, yet few studies have combined several methods of meditation in one practical study. I found few studies that focused on using sensory practices with mindfulness meditation practices in art education and museum education in the same study (see, e.g., Chung, 2011; Costantion, 2005; Rohloff, 2008).

In addition, meditation plays a significant role in different fields. While there is a substantial amount of research on meditation in the museum education setting, meditation is still

a marginal concern for art educators. For this reason, I created a somatic mindfulness project (SMP) for art education students in the art gallery setting. As art educators, we want our students to become sensitive to a higher consciousness of the current moment when they encounter visual art. By using meditation and sensory practices with students, art educators might help them to become more active and sensitive towards the visual world around them. I suggest the importance of integrating sensory practices with guided and walking meditations along with mindfulness breathing practices into art education. By encouraging educators to support students' efforts to understand their senses and body through practicing, students might gain the ability to think more clearly and concentrate on the present moment, which will help them to appreciate artwork.

My contribution to this conversation is that I combined different kinds of meditations, such as the guided meditation and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing practices, for art-appreciation in an art gallery setting on the part of art education students, which might help them to explore their sensory experiences of visual art. Further, I used different qualitative phenomenological research methods, such as participant observations and verbal and visual descriptions, which helped me explore the fundamental meaning of the perceptual experience of my participants. Importantly, I discovered new insights into the phenomenon by combining two kinds of descriptions, phenomenological verbal (written) description and visual (photographic paintings) description, to embody the meditative moment between two opposite sides: the self and the world, the subject and the object, and the visible and invisible worlds. Also, I helped my participants to reflect on their lived experience by using phenomenological descriptions and interviews. This methodological choice is unique and provided new, first-person data on the soma-aesthetics of meditative mindfulness.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS

This study used hermeneutic phenomenology as a theoretical framework along with phenomenology research methods to yield a unique understanding of the effects of guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing practices on the sensory experience of viewing art in a gallery setting. Mertens (2010) provided an explanation of how a phenomenological theoretical framework can be useful in this type of study due to its focus on "the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people" (p. 235). To understand the point of view of participants in the current moment, researchers can employ qualitative phenomenological research methods, such as participant observations, interviews, and phenomenological descriptions, along with visual research methods, such as assuming the role of photographer/visual ethnographer, focusing on the subjective experience of the participants. Friesen, Henriksson, and Saevi (2012) mentioned that an art-based approach has been used in hermeneutic phenomenology. They stated, "This is a genre or method that presents a method which bridges hermeneutic phenomenology and arts-based research by combining photography with basic verbal and pictorial elements" (p. 10). I have chosen this phenomenology approach in the research design of this study because I am interested in the embodied, perceptual, and sensorial effects of meditation and believe that the best way to gather data about them is through the first-person perspective of what it feels like to experience them.

Qualitative research methods begin by taking seriously the first-person perspective and considering how the individual's thoughts and actions are oriented toward particular things in the world, which is called intentionality. Vagle (2014) pointed out the concept of intentionality, or

"how we are meaningfully connected to the world" (p. 27). Thus, intentionality allows the thing to appear and show itself to us, as a first-person experience. To illustrate this phenomenon and make it significant to others, the researcher must provide concrete details of the lived experience of the first-person perspective in a written phenomenological description. In this chapter, I first outline what a good phenomenological description consists of, focusing on the first-person experience, intentionality, and phenomenological modes of description. Then I write about my role as a phenomenological researcher in relation to data collection and analysis procedures. In the next chapter of this study, I proceed to describe my personal experience at the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC), as a phenomenological inquiry in the field of art education and museum education. Finally, I conclude this study with a phenomenological investigation of the somatic mindfulness project (SMP), starting with my observation of the participants in the workshop.

3.1 Outline of a Good Phenomenological Description

Philosophers and scholars have pointed out the importance of the phenomenology of perception and the role of the body and senses in the world (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Flannery, 1978, 1981; Gallagher, 2005; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Hartjen, 2012; Heidegger, 1962; Hubard, 2007; Lewis, 2016; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 1993, 2004, 2012; Shusterman, 2008, 2012; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014; Zahavi, 2004). According to van Manen (2014), "Phenomenology is the way of access to the world as we experience it prereflectively" (p. 28). van Manen (2014) explained how reflective experiences that we live through emerge from the flow of daily existence when we try to recall, name, describe, or reflect on these experiences. It contrasts with traditional Cartesian philosophy, which holds that there is a dualism between the mind and body, the inside and outside, and the self and the world.

Furthermore, this phenomenological attitude is different from a natural attitude, in which the phenomenon is prevented from appearing and showing itself; according to van Manen (2014), "the phenomenological attitude is sustained by wonder, attentiveness, and a desire for meaning" (p. 220). Vagle (2014) summarized that van Manen's view of the hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on studying the essence of the lived experience as we live through it by describing the fundamental meaning of the phenomenon. Thus, we can understand how the phenomenological description aligns with the reflective experience regarding the first-person perspective that reveals the essence of the phenomenon itself.

3.1.1 First-Person Perspective

Many researchers have confirmed the importance of the role of a first-person perspective in the lived experience (Aspers, 2009; Bevan, 2014; Dortins, 2002; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Friesen, Henriksson, & Saevi, 2012; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Hoffding & Martiny, 2015; Krueger, 2011; Lester, 1999; Padilla-Diaz, 2015; Sloan & Bowe, 2014; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014; Zahavi, 2005, 2011). Stelter (2010) emphasized that the central point of qualitative phenomenological research relates to the first-person perspective and to how the individual's sensory and perceptual experience can help him to engage in the world of the experience. Moreover, Stelter (2010) explained the differences between the first- and second-person roles and the third-person role, in which the researcher takes an objective view of the study by observing from an external perspective, which results in adopting the traditional scientific approach.

Besides Stelter (2010), Gallagher and Zahavi (2008), Zahavi (2005, 2011), and Krueger (2011) pointed out that the experience is available for the first-personal givenness even before the individual recognizes it and even before others identify the experience. As Gallagher and

Zahavi (2008) stated, perceptual experience of the subject is important for describing the essential meaning that phenomenologists are interested in studying. Zahavi (2005) also focused on the central concern of phenomenologists, which is subjectivity:

> The fact that subjectivity has always been of central concern for phenomenologists, and that they have devoted so much time to a scrutiny of the first-person perspective, the structures of experience, time-consciousness, body-awareness, self-awareness, intentionality, and so forth, makes them obvious interlocutors. (p. 5)

This point is related to Merleau-Ponty's (1993) suggestion for the painter, that of taking a first-person perspective, to orient his or her intentionality toward the world that he or she wants to discover and let the phenomenon appear and show itself. In the next part of this research study, I focus on the importance of intentionality in allowing things to appear to us.

3.1.2 Intentionality

Phenomenologists have discussed the deep meaning of intentionality (Carman, 2008; Dowling, 2007; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Garza, 2011; Giorgi, 2006; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 1993, 2004, 2012; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). For example, Merleau-Ponty (1968) described the term intentionality as referring to the invisible thread that connects all beings with their world, whether they are aware of this relationship or not. Carman (2008) explained that phenomenology attempts to describe the intentionality of experience; he defined intentionality as "meaning to aim or point at, or to extend or stretch" (pp. 30-31). In addition to Carman, van Manen (2014) suggested that intentionality helps beings to be oriented and directed at things in the world; he emphasized that "Intentionality describes the ways we are 'attached' to the world and how consciousness is always being conscious of something. All our thinking, feeling, and acting are 'oriented to' or 'with' the things in the world" (p. 62). The relationship between the subject and the object in the world receives a meaningful account; this is reflected in Merleau-Ponty's ideas about the reversibility between two opposite sides, the self and the world.

Furthermore, intentionality, as van Manen (2014) argued, involves a relationship to the thing (the object in the world) and the thing-in-itself (how the thing appears and shows itself consciously to the viewer). To clarify this idea, van Manen (2014) explained how a phenomenon appears to individuals and presents itself in different intentionality, insights, and perspectives; he stated, “It might even be argued that the constitution of meaning in these methodologies is initiated, not by the subject or the ego, but by the intentionality of the things or objects that call upon us to respond” (pp. 64-65). In addition to the intentionality of things, there is an agency or a depth of the objects that are already in the world and that wait for the subject to interact with them. For example, Merleau-Ponty (1993) highlighted the power of looking at a work of art as a kind of meditation, which allows the self to extend its subjectivity and selfhood. Thus, intentionality affects our seeing of things in the world; these objects have the power to allow the phenomenon to appear to us in different ways depending on our assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives.

3.1.3 Phenomenological Description

Many scholars and phenomenologists have suggested certain methods for writing a phenomenological description to convey the structure of intentionality or the meaning which it produces (Aspers, 2009; Bevan, 2014; Dortins, 2002; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Friesen et al., 2012; Hoffding & Martiny, 2015; Lester, 1999; Padilla-Diaz, 2015; Sloan & Bowe, 2014; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). Gallagher and Zahavi (2008) pointed out the importance of the role of the phenomenologist, who encounters the visual and perceptual experience in the world and provides a rich description of his experience to embody the essential meaning of the experience itself. For example, one of the important protocols proposed by Vagle (2014) is the phenomenology walk. He stated, “The purpose of a

phenomenology walk is to see (where, what, how, and why) given phenomena might reside in various places" (p. 85). This method is a starting point, similar to walking meditation, for the researcher who wishes to guide him or herself in understanding how to conduct a phenomenological inquiry in the world. Vagle (2014) provided an outline of the protocol, starting with identifying the place one will start one's walk. This is the place one feels is a good location to see the surroundings; as Vagle (2014) stated, if it is not a good location, one should try to find another place to start one's journey.

Moreover, it is important to document what one sees on one's journey; one should write down everything after asking oneself certain questions, such as "What is happening here? What is the purpose of this place? What conversations take place here? What practices take place here?" (Vagle, 2014, p. 85). Vagle (2014) suggested that the researcher focus on his or her comprehension to understand the phenomenological study and look at the ecological sides of the location, paying more attention to the cultures, conversations, and everyday activities and practices in this site. After finishing one's walk, as Vagle (2014) stated, one should return to one's notes in order to write a journal entry; this journal entry should consist of "what you observed, what you think about it, and how you can use reading from the class and outside the class, if appropriate, to theorize it" (p. 85). Indeed, this starting point is reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's (1993) suggestion about the thought of "vision and movement," which emphasizes the significance of the visual and perceptual experience for developing an aesthetic appreciation of the world.

Beside Vagle's (2014) protocol of the phenomenology walks, van Manen presented another protocol, which is the lived experience description (LED). This writing protocol involves creating a written anecdote to collect phenomenological data. As Vagle (2014) asserted, van

Manen's lived experience description (LED) protocol includes the following directions. First, one should reflect on the event chronologically by describing what one has seen, said, heard, felt, and thought. One should describe one's experience as one is watching a film and try to describe the experience as one lives through it by writing in a direct way; if names are provided, everyone should be given a pseudonym. Furthermore, Vagle (2014) pointed out the importance of writing a statement, called the "initial post-reflective statement," after identifying the phenomenon. This statement is a useful way to describe the role of the researcher; as Vagle (2014) mentioned, in this statement, the researcher might include assumptions, beliefs, perspectives, and background in relation to the phenomenon. In addition, Vagle (2014) insisted on the importance of the researcher including what shapes his or her perceptions, views, and beliefs.

In addition, to obtain more details about how we can write a phenomenological description, we can carry out van Manen's six research activities, as Vagle (2014) stated. The first activity is "Turning to a phenomenon that seriously interests us and commits us to the world," according to Vagle (2014, p. 57). He stated that a researcher should return to the phenomenon itself by slowing down and wondering mindfully about what he cares about regarding this phenomenon. The next activity is "Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it" (Vagle, 2014, p. 58). He pointed out that if the researcher wants to conduct a phenomenological study, his methodological decisions should aid him in arriving at a cohesive method in which the phenomenon is lived, rather than focusing on how this phenomenon is conceptualized and abstracted.

The third activity is "Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon" (Vagle, 2014, p. 58). One of the features of the natural attitude is that we are limited to in-action in the sense that we cannot recognize the meaning of the phenomenon as we

live through it. However, through phenomenological inquiry, we can understand the meaning of the phenomenological experience that we could not otherwise understand when we encounter it in the lifeworld. This leads us to the phenomenological methods of bracketing and bridling (Bevan, 2014; Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Giorgi, 2006; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). van Manen (2014) defined bracketing in these terms: "Bracketing means parenthesizing, putting into brackets the various assumptions that might stand in the way from opening up access to the originary or the living meaning of a phenomenon" (p. 215). Bracketing is a way to focus on the fundamental meaning of the perceptual experience as a part of an approach for the first-person to write his phenomenological description.

The second technique for writing a phenomenological description is bridling. Vagle (2014) stated that the importance of bridling is supported by Dahlberg's reflective study about how to work as a phenomenological researcher. According to Vagle (2014), the researcher sees the phenomenon differently when he or she maintains a certain distance from the phenomenon. Therefore, we can recognize differences between a natural attitude and a phenomenological attitude; in the first attitude, as Vagle (2014) stated, "we do not reflect as we are living – we just live" (p. 68), but in a "phenomenological attitude in phenomenological research we are bridling" (p. 68). Vagle (2014) explained how the flesh between the subject, the phenomenon, and the researcher comes into being through the researcher's waiting for the phenomenon to show itself and becoming patient and attentive to the world around her- or himself. For Vagle (2014), bracketing and bridling can help the researcher to write his or her phenomenological description, thus becoming the first step in the process of studying a phenomenon.

The fourth activity, according to Vagle (2014), is "Describing the phenomenon through

the art of writing and rewriting" (p. 59); he confirmed that one way to write a phenomenological description is by using language. The next activity is "Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon" (Vagle, 2014, p. 60). This is the stage of achieving a pedagogical quality, as Vagle (2014) explained, by learning more about the phenomenon which leads through our writing to teaching others the deep fundamental meaning of our visual and perceptual experience. Finally, the last activity is "Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole" (Vagle, 2014, p. 60). This idea of thinking about the phenomenological description through parts and wholes has, as Vagle (2014) confirmed, profound philosophical origins and also has certain methodological and technical advantages. For Vagle (2014), the accurate crafting of the phenomenological description might be beneficial in making the phenomenon meaningful to others in terms of the living experience of the first-person perspective.

Many scholars have discussed the meaning of reduction (Bevan, 2014; Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). Explaining the meaning of reduction, van Manen (2014) emphasized that "Phenomenology is the method to break through this taken-for-grantedness and get to the meaning structures of our experiences. This basic method is called the reduction" (p. 215). According to van Manen (2014), the goal of the reduction is to observe the meaning structure of a phenomenon as it shows itself in the world rather than as we conceptualize it. By opening the self and trying to bracket its assumptions, common understandings, suppositions, explanations, barriers, and projections, as van Manen (2014) emphasized, we can transform ourselves and bring to light the hidden and invisible meaning of the world. Therefore, van Manen (2014) recommended projecting ourselves in the process of reduction in order to help the self to reveal

the fundamental meaning of the phenomenological experience. In the next section, I focus on how I planned the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) that I conducted with my participants after having an internship in the GDAC.

3.2 A Discussion of My Role as a Phenomenological Researcher

As part of this study, I had an internship in the GDAC between February 17-May 12, 2017. As I mentioned above, Vagle (2014) recommended some strategies for a novice phenomenological researcher, and I considered the strategies when I was in the GDAC observing Wallace's meditation sessions. For example, I focused on how visitors used their bodies in the site, and I attended various workshops in order to let the phenomena reveal themselves over time. Moreover, I took some notes and photos when I was in the GDAC regarding my role as a researcher and portraying how my experience in the GDAC framed my perspectives, assumptions, and perceptions. Also, this internship gave me the opportunity to meet certain people who assisted me in meditation, such as Brett Wallace.

In the following paragraphs, I focus on my role as a researcher in a somatic mindfulness project (SMP). I used several qualitative phenomenological methods: observation, interviews, descriptions, and researcher role as photographer/visual ethnographer. I observed my participants and their body gestures when they were at the site encountering visual art and took photos of them, which I used to trigger the participants' talking about their sensorial experiences in the interviews. Furthermore, the other qualitative phenomenological methods, interviews and written descriptions, helped to further enrich my own observations by helping to illuminate what it felt like to meditate and then engage with art. I was curious about what I learned from my participants and how they interacted through this project.

In this study, I considered how I (my own body) could affect the outcomes of this study

by focusing on “who am I?” from different aspects, such as my personal experience, gender, culture, language, religion, and educational background. For example, the reason I decided to allow Wallace to lead the meditation practice was that I considered it best that the leader of the meditation practice have efficiency in the language skills (such as native-like spoken accent), as Wallace stated. It was important to let the participants focus on the meditation process instead of focusing on the language features, such as the pronunciation and accent, of the meditation leader, which could otherwise affect the outcomes of the study. Because I am not a native speaker, my accent might have disrupted the meditative space, thus affecting the overall quality of the experience and consequently the data collected.

Another example was that I may have had a different cultural background from the participants, which might have affected the outcomes of this study. Due to my own religious heritage as a Muslim woman, I was particularly careful to “bracket” or “bridle” my own cultural norms and values in order to perceive as completely as possible what this experience meant for American participants (Bevan, 2014; Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Stelter, 2010). While it is always impossible to completely detach oneself from one’s cultural background and position in society, I hoped to at least become aware of my positionality and thus be able to take account of it. Thus, I was aware of the level to which my own voice could affect this study in terms of my religion, culture, or language. But bridling does not just mean negating one’s positionality, it can also mean using this positionality to reveal new possible meanings. For example, to make this study unique, I used Arabic definitions beside the English definitions to describe different patterns of the meditative bodies of my participants when they were encountering the artworks in the gallery, so that I could extend the English vocabulary in this study by reflecting on my own mother language. In the next section of this

research, after justifying the purpose of using a phenomenological approach and explaining how it might help me in my study, I describe and give an overview of how I collected and analyzed the data.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

In this section, I focus on several questions that helped me to clarify the methods I used for the somatic mindfulness project (SMP), and why I chose those methods. Also, I indicate where and when I did this project. Then I describe how I used the methods with my participants in order to discover the meaning of the phenomenon. First, there are two kinds of resources of qualitative methodology, which are primary resources and secondary resources (Mertens, 2010; Turabian, 2013). The primary resources of the phenomenological qualitative method are observation, interviews, and descriptions including the visual methods, such as assuming the role of photographer/visual ethnographer. The secondary resources are articles, books, dissertations/theses, videos, sound recordings (audios), pictures/images, artwork, speeches, and information/documents.

Many researchers have employed different forms of qualitative phenomenological interviews (Bevan, 2014; Dortins, 2002; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Mertens, 2010; Padillia-Diaz, 2015; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). Mertens (2010) pointed out different kinds of questions that can be asked in interviews; some of them are feeling questions, such as “How do you feel about that? How would you describe your feelings? Happy, anxious, afraid, intimidated, confident….?” (p. 243). Another kind of interview question is sensory questions, such as “What do you feel? hear? touch? taste/ smell? “What is said to you?” (Mertens, 2010, p. 243). Stelter (2010) provided an interview guide that was useful in my somatic mindfulness project (SMP). Some of these questions focus on the situation, bodily experience, thoughts or

feelings, exploration of bodily experience, change in the experience, action/behavioral changes, and other situations (p. 865). Padillia-Diaz (2015) noted that the main goal of the phenomenological interviews is constructing the meaning of the phenomena (p. 104). The questions in the interviews and written descriptions focused on the participants' perceptions of their phenomenological experience of how meditation could affect their visual experience of art in a gallery setting and how these practices developed their sensory experience of art.

3.3.1 The Description of the Phenomenological Qualitative Methods

I used different kinds of methods in order to obtain deep data to discover the meaning of phenomena (Aspers, 2009; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Mertens, 2010; Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Therefore, the reason for using phenomenological observation in this study was to help me understand the sensorial and perceptual dimensions of my participants' experiences when they viewed visual art in the GDAC. According to Marquez-Zenkov (2007), "Arts-based methodological tools are effective at enabling participants to articulate what they consider relevant to their experiences" (quoted in Vagle, 2014, p. 92). I used the photography method in order to embody participants' sensorial experience and help them to describe their phenomenological experience and remember what happened in the moment (Clark & Morriss, 2015). Clark and Morriss (2015) stated that "Visual methodologies can be seen to provide insight into difficult, emotional or otherwise sensitive issues and experience" (p. 8).

To obtain more data on these phenomena, I asked my participants to engage in phenomenological interviews and used photographs to encourage them to talk about their experiences, and I asked them to write phenomenological descriptions of any somatically-mindful moments that might reveal the meaning of the experience as a whole (Mertens, 2010; Gray & Malins, 2004). I prepared pre-meditation and post-meditation practice questions for the

two qualitative phenomenological methods: the verbal interviews (semi-structured interviews) and the written lived-experience descriptions (Aspers, 2009; Bevan, 2014; Dortins, 2002; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Foss & Waters, 2016; Hoffding & Martiny, 2015; Lester, 1999; Mertens, 2010; Padilla-Diaz, 2015; Stelter, 2010; Turabian, 2013; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). I used the same sample questions from the pre-meditation for the interviews and the written descriptions and post-meditation for the interviews and the written descriptions so that I could compare and contrast the experiences of the participants (see Script A.1). I created this project after I had gotten the approval for my IRP proposal to work with participants in the GDAC.

3.3.2 The Structure of the Somatic Mindfulness Workshop

In the next paragraphs of this section, I present a plan that includes a description of methods of carrying out the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) for art education students in the GDAC. Thus, I explain the structure of the three-day workshop, each day including three stages, which was as illustrated in Figure B.1.

Brett Wallace led the two days' meditation, and I observed and took photos of the participants when they were wandering around the gallery. Then I interviewed them and recorded the interviews with my smart phone device, and I also asked them to write phenomenological descriptions. Also, before the workshop started, I sent the audio recording of the walking meditation for mindfulness to the participants so that they could use their smart phone devices to listen to mindfulness audio recording while they were walking in the GDAC.

3.3.2.1 The First Day

The workshop started with introductions by the researcher of her somatic mindfulness project (SMP) and introduction to the leader of the meditation. In this stage, I presented some

information about the goal of the study, the structure of the three days, and the description of meditation to prepare the participants for the workshop (20 minutes). Then the participants walked around the gallery without engaging in any kind of meditation, and I observed and took photos of them in this stage (20 minutes). Next, the participants had pre-meditation interviews and made pre-meditation written descriptions (70 minutes).

3.3.2.2 The Second and Third Days

The participants practiced the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing with Wallace, and I observed them (20 minutes). Then they practiced the walking meditation around the gallery using a mindfulness audio recording, and I observed and took photos of them in this stage (20 minutes). Next, on the second and third days, both participants had post-meditation interviews and phenomenological written descriptions (70 minutes).

During my observation, I took photos and focused on the movement of the participants and their bodies regarding their nonverbal behaviors (physical communications), such as pauses, gestures, eye movement, interpersonal communication, and laughter (Mertens, 2010, p. 424). Furthermore, I was aware if there was any change in their physical communications with the visual art before and after the meditation practices, and how much time they spent before and after meditation viewing art work so that I could have a way to understand if the meditation practices affected the ways they experienced visual art. The phenomenological observation depended on personal meaning-making by the researcher, while the interviews and the written descriptions were intended to create social meaning-making because the participants shared their phenomenological experiences with others (Aspers, 2009; Dortins, 2002; Stelter, 2010).

Further, I conducted a case study with a small group (2 participants) of art education students from University of North Texas (UNT) who had experience with phenomenology, knew

how to write phenomenological descriptions and articulate their lived experience, and were willing to do this for two hours for three days. Because of their familiarity with phenomenological research methods, they already had some of the skills in first-person descriptions of lived experiences that I need. This group of participants thus were expected to be able to give me rich data with little need for further training in phenomenological descriptions. Moreover, participating in this study might help art education students in their future career as art educators who are interested in the topic of the body, the senses, and meditation.

In addition to my interviews with participants, I conducted interviews with people (experts) from art education and museum education programs who had experience with different kinds of meditation and who practiced meditation with their students (see Script A.2). For instance, I conducted an interview with Brett Wallace and asked him to work with me in the somatic mindfulness project (SMP) because of his experience of teaching meditation for 30+ years. Also, he is a licensed counselor and an ordained minister. Wallace has a master's degree in counseling as a licensed professional counselor (LPC) and a master's degree in fine art (sculpture). He has certified individuals at all levels in art and counseling. For these reasons, he was an ideal collaborator for leading the meditation sessions I had planned.

Here, I clarify my reasons for choosing the guided meditation, walking meditation, and mindfulness of breathing meditation. First, I chose the guided meditation because it was helpful to guide my participants toward what I was most interested in researching. As I remarked in my literature review, Shusterman offered useful methods, such as the body scan and the six strategies, including the use of language and closed eyes, which I used in my project. Using language and closing one's eyes were important tools that helped the participants to focus on the process of meditation, their bodies, and breathing in the present moment. These tools were

expected to assist them to overcome any interruption to their thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, as my literature review reveals, there has not been sufficient research on the impact of guided meditation on how audiences perceive art in the existing museum education research.

Second, I decided to use the walking meditation because this reflected the thought of being in the world; this practice helped the participants to understand who they are in the world, as subjects encounter visual art regarding the relationship between the self and others. Also, when the participants moved from the meditation room to the gallery, there might have been some impacts or interruptions that would hinder the meditation process. Therefore, in order to help participants to be aware and focused while wandering around the site, I planned for them to listen to a mindfulness audio recording when they were walking. Finally, I chose mindfulness breathing because this practice helped them to think only about their bodies and the process of breathing (inhalation and exhalation), which they had already practiced in the guided and walking meditation. In short, I synthesized Shusterman's suggestions with guided meditation in order to explore a phenomenon that has not yet been fully researched in the existing literature.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

My goal in this process was to focus on how the participants created the meaning of their phenomenological experience and thus to uncover the ways in which meditation and breathing practices affected their experience of artwork and discover how these practices could help them develop their perceptual experience. Authors and researchers have suggested different ways to analyze qualitative data (Dortins, 2002; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Foss & Waters, 2016; Mertens, 2010; Padilla-Diaz, 2015; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). In my study, I used a unique method to analyze the data by utilizing the verbal (written) description and the visual (photographic painting) description to reveal the fundamental meaning of the perceptual

experience of my participants when they were engaging with the artworks in the GDAC.

Similar to the approach of Foss and Waters (2016) and Vagle (2014), I used a coding method involving several processes to analyze my data, employing both the verbal (written) description and the visual (photographic painting) description. To clarify the approach of coding methods, I want to mention a data analysis method employed by Vagle (2014) in terms of moving back and forth from part to whole; he stated that:

> In short, whole-part-whole analysis methods stem from the idea that we must always think about focal meanings (e.g., moments) in relation to the whole (e.g., broader context) from which they are situated – and once we begin to remove parts from one context and put them in dialogue with other parts, we end up creating new analytic wholes that have particular meanings in relation to the phenomenon. (p. 97)

In the verbal description, I first collected all the interview transcript forms from the participants. Then I looked for concepts that appeared across the transcripts. Next, I coded the excerpts with labels according to the concepts they contained. Then I found relationships or organizing structures among the piles of coded excerpts that linked them together. I tried various organizing structures until I had found the most effective one. Finally, after the coded relationships between excerpts had been established, I made an interpretation and written description of this phenomenological experience, in which process I attempted to reduce the experience down to its essential features. I carried out the same process in analyzing participants' written descriptions, with a focus on extracting the meaning of the phenomenological experience of practicing meditation for art education students in order to discover if they would change their ways of experiencing art and if their sensorial experience would be affected.

Many scholars have discussed the role of visual art, especially painting, in improving the aesthetic experience (Brubaker, 2003; Carman, 2008; Clark, 2015; Guentchev, 2010; Hung, 2013; Johnson, 1993; Low, 2000; Mazis, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1993; Quinn, 2009; Toadvine,

1997; Vagle, 2014; Wrathall, 2010). Here, I understand the relationship between painting and phenomenology in the way Guentchev (2010) explained it, in these terms: “Painting is an example of the achieving of a primitive contact with the world that phenomenology promotes. It is an exploration of visibility that does not depend on language” (p. 1). As Guentchev (2010) notes, “painting, as phenomenology, becomes a method of description” (p. 3); furthermore, “art has an advantage over phenomenological description: it immediately puts to the test of vision itself what the artist sets down on canvas” (Wrathall, 2010, p. 21). Thus, Wrathall (2010) stated that:

> Each painting that succeeds in making us see something directly, that is, without functioning as a symbol that we associate with the object through a kind of mental act, will have partially unlocked the secret of vision by placing before us some of those things in virtue of which we are moved by the world to see. (p. 21)

The importance of using painting as a kind of phenomenological description became clearly important in my study in terms of showing the present moment of the lived experience.

Moreover, I agree with Merleau-Ponty regarding how the nature of photographs is different from that of paintings; Merleau-Ponty stated, “By remaining true to the phenomena in his investigations of perspective, Cezanne discovered what recent psychologists have come to formulate: lived perspective, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one” (Guentchev, 2010, pp. 2-3). For these reasons, I decided to use painting with photography to throw light on the phenomenon as it is in the world by emphasizing the current moment of the perceptual experience of my participants.

In the next part of this section, I present the photographic painting creation method, which involved several steps in the coding of my data. First, I chose specific photos that reflected the meditative mood between the participants and the artworks in the world before and after the participants practiced different kinds of meditation. I chose photos taken from the same camera

location (position) and that represented how the artworks influenced the movements and body postures of the participants when they were looking slowly at these artworks and walking carefully around the gallery in different meditative moments. Next, I utilized a photo merger website to create representations of the meditative body of the participants in the gallery. Finally, I painted on these photos to present a certain moment of repetition, reversibility, intertwining, fuzziness, and transparency that took place between the meditative bodies of the participants and the artworks.

Thus, in my photographic painting, I tried to depict the feeling of meditative flesh that emerged between the subject (participant) and the object (artwork) in the world (gallery). Indeed, using the photographic painting helped me to depict different moments that took place before different kinds of meditation had been practiced and even after meditation, in one photo, had been practiced. While Merleau-Ponty seems critical of the photographic image, my arts-informed research method finds the chiasm between painting and photography, creating a layered image of a lived experience that can only exist somewhere between the two mediums.

This process helped me, as an artistic-phenomenological researcher, to embody visually the perceptual experience of my participants when they were encountering the artworks in the gallery setting and when verbal description was not sufficient for depicting what I saw. Indeed, I recognize a deep meaning in Merleau-Ponty's thought about the art, as he said: "'art and only art' can exhibit for us the world as we perceive it" (Wrathall, 2010, p. 11). Using verbal and visual descriptions helped me to explore the essence of the visual, embodied, and perceptual experience of my participants before and after they practiced the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing when they were looking at a work of art in its environment.

3.5 Summary

In this study, I explored the impact of meditation on sensations, emotions, and perceptions within a museum education setting. I based this study on Shusterman's ameliorative pragmatic approach, which attributes a meaningful function to bodily experience in aesthetic appreciation. In his pragmatic study, he offered different examples of using mindfulness meditation and breathing; however, he did not relate his pragmatic study to art education and museum education. On the other hand, there have been many recent studies concerned with using sensory practices in art education and museum education. While there is a substantial amount of research on meditation in the museum education setting, meditation is still a marginal concern for art educators, especially in the guided form which interests me most.

For these reasons, I carried out a somatic mindfulness project (SMP) that employed Shusterman's techniques of body scan combined with guided and walking meditation along with breathing practices. The aim of this study was to understand how guided and walking meditation practices with mindfulness of breathing could affect the visual and sensorial experiences of art education students in a gallery setting. The contribution of this study has been to observe the combined effect of several practices of meditation for art appreciation in a gallery setting with art education students in order to explore possible changes in their visual and sensory experiences. Moreover, I offer a case study that depended on a phenomenological description to help participants reflect on their experience. Also, I combined verbal and visual descriptions to embody the moment of reversibility, repetition, interlacing, and fuzziness between two opposite sides, subject and object, self and world, or visible and invisible. This methodological choice is unique and provides new, first-person data on the soma-aesthetics of meditative mindfulness.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

Many philosophers and scholars have argued for the importance of the body as a topic in phenomenology (Anderson, 2003; Carman, 2008; Cunliffe, 2005; Flannery, 1978, 1981; Gallagher, 2005; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Hartjen, 2012; Heidegger, 1962; Hubard, 2007; Lewis, 2016; Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 1993, 2004, 2012; Shusterman, 2008, 2012; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014; Zahavi, 2004). Qualitative research methods begin by taking seriously the first-person perspective and considering how the individual's thoughts and actions are oriented toward particular things in the world. Vagle (2014) pointed out the concept of intentionality, or "how we are meaningfully connected to the world" (p. 27). Thus, intentionality allows the phenomenon to appear and show itself to us, as a first-person experience. To illustrate this phenomenon and make it significant to others, the researcher must provide concrete details of the lived experience of the first-person perspective in a written phenomenological description.

Now, I proceed to describe my own experience at the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC), as a phenomenological inquiry in the field of art education and museum education. In this I focus on doing a phenomenological written description about my own first-person experience with meditation and the effects it had on my perception of art by considering how it affected my body, my movement, my concentration, etc. The following reflections on shifts in my own intentionality as well as my initial observations of other visitors to GDAC form the background to my actual research project. But this background is important to highlight because it is part of the experience which I carried with me into my research.

4.1 Description of My Own Experience

In this section, I focus on my own experience when I had an internship in the GDAC

between February 17th and May 12th, 2017. Vagle (2014) recommended certain strategies for a novice phenomenological researcher that I considered when I was in the GDAC. For example, he advised writing an "initial post-reflective statement" after identifying the phenomenon in order to determine one's assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives. Therefore, in my internship, I used Vagle's protocol of the phenomenology walks, and I took notes about how my experience in the GDAC framed my perspectives, assumptions, and perceptions. I used the guidelines of van Manen's lived experience description (LED) as a written anecdote protocol, which helped me to write the phenomenological description. Also, I engaged in different activities, such as observing Wallace's meditation sessions, focusing on how visitors used their bodies at the site, and attending several workshops in order to allow the phenomena to reveal themselves over time. Moreover, I noted how my experience in the GDAC helped me to meet certain people who assisted me in meditation, such as Brett Wallace.

For the next step of this study, I focus on how my own experience affected my body, movement, and concentration. First, I describe the GDAC site where I interned. Then I describe my role as a phenomenological researcher at the GDAC site by providing several examples of my own personal experience. Also, I provide a description of how I observed the visitors when they encountered the visual art in the GDAC setting. Finally, I highlight my experience of practicing the guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing in connection with art-appreciation and various art-making activities with Brett Wallace at the GDAC.

4.1.1 Description of the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC) Site

The GDAC (see Figure B.2) has two entrances; one of them is the main entrance (the West Wing). To the left side of the main entrance, there is the Meadows Gallery that has large windows and a door leading to three large storages. To the right side of the main entrance, there

is the Festival Hall that has the front office, the Associate Director's office, stairs leading to EMA Ruth Russell Dance Studio and other storages. This hall has two big doors leading to the outside of the GDAC, and also there are several windows on each side that help to light up the space effectively. In the upper-right side of the Festival Hall, there are the staff offices (the executive director, exhibitions coordinator, and education coordinator). In the upper-left side of the Festival Hall, there are the second entrance (the East Wing) of the GDAC, the Gough Gallery, the Library & the Conference Room, and the Arts & Craft Studio. The Gough Gallery has a balcony with a steel handrail, a door leading to the Arts & Craft Studio, and a wooden bench in the left side of the gallery. The Library & the Conference Room has a large table with chairs, and there are many books and resources. The Arts & Craft Studio has Emergency Exit, Mechanical Room, and a small storage; also, the studio has a large window, couches, tables, chairs, and cabinets.

4.1.2 Who I am/was as a Phenomenological Researcher

Many studies have debated the lived experience for the phenomenological researcher (Bevan, 2014; Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2004; Dowling, 2007; Eddles-Hirsch, 2015; Stelter, 2010; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). According to Vagle (2014), it is important to start one's journey in research from a rich place that induces one's senses to learn more and discover knowledge: "The phenomenological craftsperson has to have a place to start and needs to have a way to proceed" (p. 52). The starting point of my journey in research was the GDAC site. Before describing my role as a phenomenological researcher, I focus on a specific reflection that shifted my intentionality and helped me understand who I am in the world. Vagle (2014) also described the shift in our perspective from moment to moment depending on how we interact with the world perceptually and mindfully; he stated:

> Every moment is a change in perspective, even if it is mostly unconscious and not reflected upon. This leads to a focus on contexts in which humans' perspective shifts suddenly, or can at least be compared to an earlier, different perspective. (p. 128)

For instance, in the beginning, I behaved unconsciously as any visitor does in the gallery as I looked at a work of art, read the wall label, took photos of different artworks, and engaged in discussions with other people. Indeed, the act of taking pictures of different artworks became a sign for me to wake up and shift my perspective by directing the intentionality toward the goal of this study, which is observing how visitors experience a work of art perceptually and mindfully. This was a very large change in the orientation of my intentionality, one which was very important for the actual study which I describe in the next chapters.

To provide clear specific details about how my own experience affected my body, movement, and concentration, I here reflect on different situations that I experienced when I was in the gallery at the GDAC. Practicing mindfulness as a researcher affected my movement in the gallery as I walked mindfully. I felt my steps on the floor were different from before; I felt the flesh in the environment that created a connection between me and other objects. I started to think, walk, look, and observe mindfully when I connect my body to the surrounding world – the GDAC site. I started to attempt to open myself up to my experience so that I could identify the phenomenon (the interaction between visitors and artwork) and look around to let it appear. More specifically, I practiced mindfully observing the visitors and looking at their bodies' reactions.

This phenomenological experience made me think deeply about my relationships with the environment and others and how we have different perspectives. I thought about the visitors in the GDAC, and how they would interact with me by asking myself whether they would accept me as a foreign person, as a Muslim woman. In the first few days, I stayed in the room and did

not connect with the public visitors. At that time, I had some concerns regarding connecting with the public and engaging in conversation with them because I am a Muslim. I feared I would be judged in a town where most of the population is of a different religion than myself. Later, I encouraged myself to overcome these anxieties and tried to engage gradually with the public by observing them and talking with them. Indeed, there was a reverse relationship between the visitors and me in the way they looked at me and the way I looked at them. This reversibility between us embodied the relationship between the self and others.

Figure 1: Photovoice. This figure illustrates how my own experience affected me in different ways.

Next, I provide a specific example that illustrates how my own experience affected my understanding of the relationship between researcher and research project. Looking at different works of art has stimulated my sensory perception and cognitive development. For instance, once when I stood in front of a digital video directed by Charles Nguyen (Figure 1) and took a photo of his work, I found my self-image reflected in the artwork's glass. I took another photo from a different angle, but my image was still reflected in the artwork's glass. In the last attempt, I took another photo from a different angle, but I was still there on the glass surface. Part of my hand and my phone was reflected on the glass of the digital video. I gave up, deciding that I could not take a photo that did not reflect myself. However, I began thinking about some ways to meet my goal.

After a while, I understood an important idea: that even though I was trying to ignore my presence and my effect on this research, I still existed as a researcher who might affect the outcomes of research, and that this research might affect me too in some way. I understood that it is impossible to ignore who I am, or to completely bracket my own culture, religion, and language because I am a part of this research and the creator of each section of this study. This opens my eyes to the fact that the outcomes of my study are different from other researchers' outcomes because we are different in our cultural norms and values. Moreover, in my view, this difference gives each research its significance; it makes this study unique and distinctive in its field. In sum, my personal reflection on this experience has sharpened my perspective positively by allowing me to think back afterwards and understand my role in this study.

Over time, I started to recognize that my role here is different from that of other visitors, as I was becoming a phenomenologically attuned and mindful researcher. I shifted my intentionality and bracketed my old habits of being in the gallery as a visitor and focused on my

intentionality as a phenomenological researcher. I paid attention to each moment while I was wandering around the gallery in the GDAC, trying to find any clues that could help me begin to design my dissertation project. During this period of trial and error, I used different methods to help me discover interesting possibilities. Some of these methods included wondering, walking, observing, engaging with different workshops, and having conversations with staff and visitors. I started asking myself different questions, such as: Who am I? What should I do here? What is my role as a phenomenological researcher? How should I observe the visitors? Will they accept me as a foreign person – as a Muslim woman? For the next step of this study, I provide a deep description of how the visitors interacted with some visual art in the GDAC setting.

4.1.3 How I Observed the Visitors in the GDAC Site

As I started my journey in research, I observed visitors in order to understand their phenomenologically embodied experience and took notes on how they encountered the visual art and used their bodies and senses to project themselves. I observed groups of people, who had a conversation about a work of art or maybe any other topic; perhaps they gave their judgment or some comments about some artworks. I tried to look at their gestures, pauses, and facial expressions to understand how they experienced the visual art and lived this experience through their bodies. For instance, visitors' level of attention seemed to express itself through specific types of looking, kneeling down to find details, or sitting on a chair to have more time to observe a work of art; these artworks seemed to have something interesting that called them to come and look more closely. This reminded me of Merleau-Ponty's reflection about how the world attracts the painter's attention and calls him or her to look consciously at the surrounding objects. Connecting Merleau-Ponty with my observations made me more and more interested in following the body postures of the visitors in order to glimpse the ways in which the body and

works of art communicate with one another on an unconscious level of attunement.

Furthermore, I noticed that people visit museums or galleries and look at art similarly (at least in an American setting): they look closely at some of the artwork, pay attention to details, make conversations together, take some photos, judge and give their opinions rapidly. In the *Materials Hard and Soft* gallery, I walked around the gallery and observed some visitors (college students), who attracted my attention because of their bodily reactions when they encountered the artworks. For example, I saw four visitors stood closer to each other when they were looking carefully for a short period at one of these artworks. On the right side, there was a visitor looking quickly at a work of art while she was holding a writing board. Later, I looked behind myself to see another visitor squatting and looking closely at a work of art as she held the writing board.

Then I observed another visitor who stood in front of a work of art and took some pictures from her cell phone to get some details. Behind her, there were two visitors; one of them was looking at a small piece of artwork when she held the writing board with her right hand, and the left hand held her right arm. Another visitor turned her back to move to other artworks, and she was holding the board with both of her hands. Moreover, I noticed three visitors were standing in front of two artworks; one of them was walking slowly toward the wall label when another visitor was looking closely at one of these artworks. The third visitor was standing behind the two visitors; she was looking at the artwork and holding her cell phone with her right hand and the board by the left hand.

After that, they moved to another artwork (insects' artwork) when two of them were taking some photos with their cell phones. One of them was standing straight by making her feet a bit close to each other, but the second visitor moved her right leg one step forward. The third visitor was standing a little way from them while she held some papers with her two hands.

Later, I walked around the exhibition to notice a group of visitors who were standing close to a collection of artworks. Two of them were writing some notes, and the other two visitors were talking and looking at these artworks.

After a while, I was looking mindfully and found a visitor who was looking at artwork pieces (children's shoes) and reading from its projector screen; he was listening carefully to an audio recording of this artwork while he was holding some papers with his right hand. At that time, another visitor was reading from this screen when she bent her back forward a little bit. Later, I extended my view beyond this to notice another visitor (with a red blouse) who was looking very close to a work of art while she was standing straight and crossing her arms. I moved my attention to the other side of the gallery to see two visitors; one of them was looking closer to a work of art while holding a sheet of papers with her two hands. Another visitor was looking at different artworks and holding her hands behind her back.

I turned my attention again to the left side of the gallery to see the visitor with the red blouse was still standing in front of the same artwork and keeping the same body posture. I walked slowly toward her to observe her physical reactions when she encountered the artwork. She was standing very close to the artwork (she touched the artwork with her arms) and looking mindfully to the middle of this piece while crossing her two hands and kept her body straight. I moved my attention to find another visitor who was looking slowly at the projector screen of the artwork while holding her right wrist by her left hand. After a few minutes, I saw a visitor squatting and taking close photos of some tiny artworks (the small insects) on the floor. Then I observed two visitors came to watch these art pieces. One of them was squatting and pointed her finger at some of these small pieces while she was holding a cell phone and some papers with her left hand. Another visitor was standing beside her friend and talking about these pieces while she

pointed at them with a pencil.

In fact, it was difficult to observe a group of people in a short time and get enough details from them in order to reveal the fundamental meaning of their sensorial and perceptual experience in the phenomenological research study. On the other hand, it was easy to describe and remember their sensorial experience by using photos of them, which allowed me to see and think again about the ways in which bodies and art work connect to one another, even if only for a second. Indeed, using visual methods has helped me to focus more clearly on the sensorial experience of looking at works of art in a gallery setting. From these initial experiments with observing and recording my observations of visitors, I decided to use visual methods - a visual description - with phenomenological qualitative methods - a verbal description - to explore the fundamental meaning of the experience for the following dissertation project.

It is obvious that some artworks attract our attention more than others, which affects our ways of experiencing visual art perceptually and mindfully. Therefore, I asked some visitors about their visual and sensorial experience in order to gain different perspectives about how their subjectivity, preferences, inclinations, or assumptions could affect their ways of experiencing visual art. For instance, in the *Materials Hard and Soft* gallery, I saw some visitors looking mindfully at a work of art (the small insects), fascinated by how the artist could make all these tiny art pieces. By contrast, other visitors did not like these artworks and wanted to kill the insects because they were disgusting and spread quickly. I recognized the fact that even if individuals encounter the same experience in the world, our reflections and reactions might be different. Therefore, my experience in the GDAC allowed me to anticipate that the fundamental meaning of my participants could be different in some way because they will interact differently when they encounter the visual art. Thus, I realized that my dissertation would have to embrace

diversity. There might not be a single “essence” or “structure” to the viewing of art. Instead, I had to ready myself to accept difference. In the following somatic mindfulness project (SMP), I wanted to understand how the participants might interact meaningfully with a work of art by shifting their body reactions, and how these reactions might be highly personal (rather than generalizable).

Walking around the galleries to prepare for my dissertation research, I also realized that I would need to be very mindful of which gallery space I would choose to focus on. I decided to carry out my somatic mindfulness project (SMP) in one particular gallery setting because it was a meditative place that might help the participants to be relaxed and attentive to the visual art around them. In addition, I recalled the particularly meditative qualities of mandalas, icons, and memento mori images discussed previously, and decided to focus on art that itself had meditative qualities. It was my assumption that it would be easier for participants to focus on art if the galleries were themselves quiet with little distraction and that the art was relatively calm or meditative in nature.

Also, I decided to practice the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing in the art-making and art-appreciation sessions led by Brett Wallace before conducting this phenomenological research with participants. It is important for the phenomenological researcher, as someone having a first-person experience, to discover how a phenomenon appears and shows itself in the world. I turned my intentionality to understanding how practicing different kinds of meditation could affect my way of experiencing visual art perceptually and mindfully. This might help me understand the experience of my participants in the future, but also might enable me to bridle some of my assumptions about meditation.

Through my own experience of meditation, I continued wondering and asking myself

certain questions: What is the connection between meditation and art-appreciation and/or art-making? Are art-appreciation and/or art-making a kind of meditation? How do meditation and art-appreciation and/or art-making relate to each other? What are the benefits of using meditation with art-appreciation and art-making? What kinds of artworks and art-making practices could help me to practice meditation? I thought about the relationships between those practices that combine art-appreciation, art-making and meditation with the art education field by asking myself these questions: How could meditation and art-making activities help art educators to support their students in the classroom? What kinds of challenges and possibilities will students have through practicing art-appreciation and art-making with meditation in the classroom? Thus, all these questions encouraged me to look more deeply at the relationship between meditation and art-appreciation and/or art-making, which is the area of investigation of my eventual dissertation study. Before starting this investigation, I want to provide a brief interview with Brett Wallace, who leads the guided meditation with art-making and art-appreciation sessions.

4.1.4 The Interview with the Expert – Brett Wallace

I started our interview by asking him about his experience in meditation (see Script A.2). Wallace stated he is doing a basic sitting meditation, which is called the guided and walking meditations, for 40 years. This basic sitting meditation is based on the Hindu meditation techniques of Patanjali. Wallace pointed out some meditative activities that begin with “find a quiet place, get in a comfortable sitting position, slow your breathing and shut your eyes, focus your attention inside yourself, and relax your body from your head to your feet.” Then he started with the guided meditation to get what meditators need spiritually, emotionally, and artistically.

In addition, in the 1990s, Wallace personally developed a workshop for three days called “Recreating Yourself” for Montessori teachers to open more creativity for them and their

students by practicing meditation and art therapy techniques in the classroom. Wallace modified this workshop slightly to assist some local artists to rid negative feelings and thoughts in order to connect effectively with their artworks. Recently, in the last two years, he worked with me, at my request, to help my participants to be aware of the artwork they were looking at by using the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing.

Wallace stated how he led this session, and what his procedure or technique of practicing this program was; he said that "Once the students are relaxed and in a meditative posture, the teacher verbally guides the students to observe something in a specific way." Then he continued, stating that "This common guidance puts everyone on the same page/ or into the same mindset. This consistency of relaxation and shared vision helps the observations of all students to be similar in many ways." Wallace indicated how practicing a meditation before art-making or art appreciation could help the students interweave with their emotions when they are looking at art or making art. In the end, he told me about his program that was improved over time depending on the participants' needs. In the next step of this section, I want to focus on my different practices of art-making and art-appreciation with the guided meditation and breathing led by Brett Wallace.

4.1.5 The Guided Meditation with Art-Appreciation and Art-Making Sessions

I engaged in the guided meditation and breathing in connection with art appreciation and various art-making activities with Brett Wallace at the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC), and I had different kinds of experiences engaging with art after I meditated. In this section, I focus on my visual and sensorial experience and how this experience affected my body, movement, and concentration. Many scholars and philosophers have discussed the importance of practicing meditation and mindfulness to help the self transfer the confines of its subjectivity and

selfhood (Albahari, 2011; Clothier, 2012; Dreyfus, 2011; Fasching, 2011; Ganeri, 2011; Krueger, 2011; Shusterman, 2011, 2012; Thompson, 2011; Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014; Zahavi, 2005, 2011). van Manen (2014) pointed out that reduction could help us to cope with our subjectivity and selfhood; he stated:

> In the reduction one needs to overcome one's subjective or private feelings, preferences, inclinations, or expectations that may seduce or tempt one to come to premature, wishful, or one-sided understandings of an experience that would prevent one from coming to terms with a phenomenon as it is lived through. (p. 224)

Looking carefully at a work of art, observing visitors and taking pictures of them, writing notes, wondering and walking slowly, and being at the GDAC site were practices and activities representing a kind of contemplative reflection which helped me to bracket the self and overcome subjectivity in order to discover the fundamental meaning of my experience.

4.1.5.1 The Guided Meditation with Art-Appreciation Session

Before practicing the guided meditation, I walked to the gallery and looked at some artworks. At that time, I had little desire to engage with these artworks because they presented concepts about death, skulls, and skeletons. Then I came back to the Dance Studio to start practicing the guided and breathing meditation with Wallace (see Script C.1). First, he asked me to be still, straighten my back, close my eyes, and take deep breaths. I struggled to get away from my thoughts, yet I tried to listen to Wallace and concentrate on what he said in order to overcome my subjectivities and limitations. Wallace brought my attention back to my body and breathing by asking me several times to take a deep breath and focus on each part of my body. I became relaxed gradually and focused on my body while I listened to his voice; I felt the tone of his voice (smooth) had some power that made me engage in meditation deeply. After he finished the meditation discourse, he asked me if I was ready to open my eyes. I tried to talk with him

about my perceptual experience, but he asked me to be silent and go directly to the same gallery that I had visited.

I walked slowly to the gallery, watching my steps mindfully, observing the people around the gallery, and looking deeply at the paintings. At that time, I felt as if I was in another world, or as if I was dreaming. I could not say where I was; I think I was in another place or at another time. In the gallery, I stopped in front of some of the same paintings that reflected the concepts of the death, skulls, and skeletons. This time, I was attentive and patient when I looked slowly at these paintings and focused more on details. I spent more time looking at these paintings, and I saw some things that I had not noticed before practicing meditation. For example, I felt how the red color was very vivid and active, appearing to extend outside of the painting. I felt its movement and felt how the red color could touch my hand and my body, while I could touch it with my hand. At that time, I understood the meaning of reversibility between the subject and object that Merleau-Ponty (1968, 1993, 2004, 2012) described of how the self could transform between the two worlds - visible and invisible worlds. Later, I came back to the Dance Studio and shared my visual and perceptual experience with Wallace.

Indeed, my prejudices, preferences, and private feelings affected my way of looking at a work of art; however, by somatic mindfulness training, my body gained the power to overcome the external and internal effects. Meditation practices have taught me how to trust my body and senses. I trust my eye, and that lets me see details that I could not recognize before. I think about the depth of my vision, which affects my way of looking at the paintings. It affected my perception to be in the world with others; I trust my body, which gave me a unique visual and sensorial experience that my mind could not give to me. I trust my body and its movement, which gave me the experience of the first-person perspective.

4.1.5.2 The Guided Meditation with Art-Making Sessions

Having described my experience of practicing the guided meditation with art-appreciation, I want to focus on another experience of practicing meditation with art-making. During all of my meditation sessions with Wallace, he used language to grasp the meditator's attention in order to help place them in the present moment. For example, he described there is a light that has a power and comes from the sky to touch our heads and then move to other parts of our bodies. He asked me to do the same practices, such as being still, straightening my back, closing my eyes, and taking deep breaths. In fact, I felt myself transformed from one place to another, just as if this light gave me (the self) its power in order to let me move freely. Practicing meditation offered a free place to project the self in different worlds. At the end of the guided meditation session, he asked me to open my eyes when I felt I was ready and to use different materials and items that he provided for me.

Figure 2: Bassi Artwork 1. This figure is a self-narrative reflection of how I overcome the difficulties that prevented me from reducing my subjectivity.

Practicing the guided meditation affected my vision in seeing the world around me, so I reflected on what I heard from Wallace about the light on my artwork (Figure 2). This painting is a self-narrative reflection of how I overcame the feelings, challenges, and difficulties that prevented me from reducing my subjectivity and limitation. Practicing the guided meditation with art-making opened different possibilities for me by encouraging me to face my obstacles and concerns. I could not stop thinking; there was a voice in my head asking me to fight in order to achieve my goals; this voice urged me to not give up and to keep resisting. When I drew different circles and lines, I felt there were positive feelings that let me release some of my stress and anxiety. This experience touched me very deeply by giving me a new sense of being conscious of the things around me in the world.

Figure 3: Bassi Artwork 2. This figure reflects the concept of reversibility between the self and others in the world by Merleau-Ponty.

Practicing art-making after the guided meditation gave me a space to express my freedom without any barriers, and I just reflected what I felt. I had a free play in which I did not plan or

think about what I wanted to draw. My body engaged completely and flowed freely as I let my hand play with different colors on a sheet of paper (Figure 3). The self could be conveyed in each part of this artwork as it tells its story; indeed, it reflected my identity or who I am, as a mother, who carries her children in her arms to protect them. This artwork reflected the concept of reversibility between the self and others in the world by Merleau-Ponty.

Figure 4: Bassi Artwork 3. This figure reflects how the guided meditation gave me (the self) a free place to engage in the art-making process.

Moreover, starting with the guided meditation gave me (the self) a free place to engage in the art-making processes. Here, another artwork allowed my fingers to play freely to create what they like and add details to decorate my mask with different lines and dots (Figure 4). I was not curious about the production or the end of the art-making process. I knew there is no judgment of my artwork; no one will evaluate whether my artwork is good or bad. As a result, practicing the guided meditation with art-appreciation and art-making taught me not only how to appreciate the world around me, but also how to appreciate my body and senses that helped me open more possibilities in order to project myself in the world.

4.2 Summary

By writing the phenomenological description, I should be able to recognize the fundamental meaning of my visual and perceptual experience by reflecting on my own lived

experience, from a first-person perspective. In fact, the best way to gather data in the phenomenology approach is through the first-person perspective of what it feels like to experience how the guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing practices affect my own way of experiencing visual art in the gallery setting. I have focused on my own experience when I was in the GDAC and described different activities and practices, such as observing visitors and their body gestures when they are in the site encountering visual art, wondering and walking mindfully, looking at a work of art mindfully, and being in the art gallery setting. In addition to these mindfulness practices, practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing are significant methods that might help the self to bracket its assumptions, private feelings, and preferences to reveal the fundamental meaning of the visual and perceptual experience.

CHAPTER 5

DATA COLLECTION: SOMATIC MINDFULNESS PROJECT (SMP)

Moving from my personal experience and overview of methods of research, I now outline the data leading up to and collected during my workshop. This section has two parts; the first one focuses on answering the question of why I have chosen a specific exhibition for my workshop, and the second part is the structure of the somatic mindfulness workshop which focuses on the phenomenological observation dependent on the researcher's personal meaning-making.

5.1 Somatic Mindfulness Workshop

I had received approval from the Greater Denton Arts Council (GDAC) and from the leader of the meditation session, Brett Wallace, as a starting point for the workshop of this study. Soon after, I coordinated a proper time with the leader, the participants, and the availability of the different exhibitions. It was quite complicated to find a suitable time that worked for my participants to attend an exhibition. However, even after discussing with the participants, the leader, and the available exhibitions, I was still worried over what kinds of problems I might face during the workshop. I had to think about how I could solve some of these problems and be ready before the workshop started. Before describing the somatic mindfulness workshop, I want to highlight some details about my preparation for the workshop.

5.2 Preparing for the Somatic Mindfulness Workshop

In addition to reviewing the literature on phenomenology and mindfulness outlined previously, I needed to know more about the available exhibitions at the GDAC, and what kinds of artworks would be on display. I wasn't sure which artworks and gallery could work better and support my study. Hence, I decided to visit the GDAC before the workshop started and look at all the galleries to see which one would be most suitable for my study relying on Merleau-

Ponty's and mindfulness's thoughts.

Suitability in this case had less to do with the content of the art and more to do with the ways in which it was displayed. My assumption was that the kind of deeply meditative state I was looking for would only be possible if the exhibit was somewhat removed or isolated from noise and other activities in the GDAC. I wanted to maximize the possibility for the participants to clear their minds of assumptions and enter into the experience with few distractions. Furthermore, I wanted a small exhibit with few pieces so as to increase possibilities for attentive viewing. Too many objects would be difficult for me, as a researcher observing participants, to follow their movements closes, and might be difficult for the participants to concentrate fully on any given piece. Also, I was looking for works that might induce a meditative mood in terms of their content and form. While this might not be necessary, I nevertheless felt it might be important for the works of art to invite contemplative states of being, not unlike the meditative forms found in mandala, iconic, and memento mori art.

Besides the reason of visiting the gallery to know about the exhibitions and the artworks, I needed to visit the GDAC before the workshop to get the first-person experience of the gallery. This was important because I did not want to be distracted from observing my participants by looking at the artworks during the workshop. I needed to make a deliberate plan without any arbitrary expectations that could lead the research astray because of my interest in particular pieces of art. In this sense, a visit before the study was needed so I could bracket out the artworks and focus on the participants interactions with the art and with the space.

The reasons for choosing one, specific exhibit was as follows. First, I was working with the schedules of my participants (they had just three days, and they needed to spend just 20 minutes for visiting the gallery each day). In addition, I wanted them to focus more on a few

artworks rather than glancing over many artworks. Furthermore, I decided to let them walk freely around one gallery instead of selecting some artworks. The way I saw it, selecting a specific artwork might affect their engagement because they'd feel someone (the researcher) forced them to look at a particular piece. I wanted them to wander around the gallery as they are always doing in a gallery without any interference, allowing works of art to call to them in their own unique ways.

What were the exhibitions in the GDAC? There were three exhibitions in the GDAC I had to choose from. The first exhibition was *A Plain View – Photographs from Texas* by Jason Lee in Meadows Gallery on June 2 – August 25, 2018. The second exhibition was *God's World as I See It* by Paul Gray in Festival Hall on June 8 – August 25, 2018. The third exhibition was *Structured Light* by Associate Professor Colby Parsons in Gough Gallery on June 8 – August 28, 2018.

Why have I chosen the *Structured Light* in Gough Gallery? My initial selection had been the *Structured Light* exhibition, which I chose before I visited the GDAC. Because I didn't have enough information or understanding of how the exhibition would be installed, I needed to see it for myself to make sure it would work with my study. Thus, I have chosen the *Structured Light* after visiting the GDAC and comparing the three exhibitions with each other.

For example, *A Plain View – Photographs from Texas* was located beside the main door (the West Wing), where there would be noise coming from incoming visitors. Even though this exhibition contained several pieces, it presented some photographs that I was not sure would attract my participants effectively in this workshop. In fact, I am using Merleau-Ponty's thought in this study, and he focuses on paintings in his later work. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty held some specific views about how photography is different from painting, as Guentchev (2010) stated.

Next, the second exhibition was titled *God's World as I See It*, which was in the Festival Hall. I also had concerns about this exhibition as it was in an open place that could have many visitors who might distract the participants. I noticed this show also had more photographs than the previous one, which might distract the participants too. The main door in the West Wing was more crowded than the one in the East Wing because it led to the front office in the Festival Hall.

On the other hand, the *Structured Light* was quieter than the other two exhibitions because it was presented in the Gough Gallery, which was near the main door in the East Wing. Moreover, this exhibition contained only a few artworks which might help the participants focus more on these artworks without exhausting them by looking at many pieces in a short period of time. The exhibition fit perfectly with my study regarding the effectiveness of creating a meditative mood by calling their attention to look at how the artist used balance with different elements, such as light, shadow, form, and movement in his artworks. According to Merleau-Ponty, when a painting (artwork) looks at you and somehow calls your attention, it gives you the feeling of its presence. Hence, I need a work of art that not just simply calls my participants and presents a meditative mood, but also calls them in a certain way so that there can be reversibility between two meditative states (the meditative state of the work of art and of the participants). I concluded the *Structured Light* exhibition was a rich resource for my participants that could help me in my workshop.

5.2.1 Description of the Gough Gallery

In front of the main door in the East Wing, there stands the Gough Gallery, which has a wooden door with glass windows. You can easily notice the gallery is L-shaped as well. The walls of the gallery are, at the time, painted white, making the gallery appear more spacious than its actual size. Furthermore, there are several light sources that illuminate the gallery. Moreover,

on the left side of the gallery, there is a balcony that has a steel handrail with circle shapes on the glass partition it was attached to. The balcony belongs to the upper room, which has some tables and chairs, three standing light units (lamps), office and art supplies, and several large art pieces. The room is equipped with four neon illuminations, but these was always turned off.

5.2.2 Description of the *Structured Light* Exhibition by Colby Parsons

The exhibition used a different way of employing the dim light in the gallery, which helped shape the artworks by playing with the light and shadow. The artist highlighted the dim light on the artworks to reflect their shadows on the wall. Some of these artworks used glazed ceramic concrete, plastic, acrylic, plywood, stainless steel, and an LED light fixture. Three of the artworks used glazed stoneware and a projected video loop. One of them also used a steel frame. The artist also used a projector to produce a rhythmic movement that reflected back onto these artworks.

5.2.3 The *Structured Light*'s Artworks

The exhibition has presented nine artworks by Colby Parsons:

- Artwork 1 (*Cylinder with Hexagon Grid*) (Glazed ceramic concrete, plywood, stainless steel, and LED light fixture)
- Artwork 2 (*Double Cone with Hexagon Grid*) (Glazed ceramic concrete, plastic, acrylic, stainless steel, and LED light fixture)
- Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) (Acrylic, plywood, stainless steel, and LED light fixture)
- Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*) (Glazed stoneware, projected video loop)
- Artwork 5 (*Three by Five Square Grid*) (Acrylic, plywood, stainless steel, and LED light fixture)
- Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*) (Glazed stoneware, projected video loop)
- Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) (Glazed stoneware, projected video loop, steel frame)

- Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*) (Plastic, plywood, stainless steel, and LED light fixture)
- Artwork 9 (*Oval Cylinder with Triangle Grid*) (Glazed ceramic concrete, plastic, acrylic, stainless steel, and LED light fixture)

Finally, on the left side of the exhibition, there were two boards; the first one was about the bibliography of the artist, Colby Parsons, the second board was about his artworks. For the next step of this section, I give a detailed description of my observation of the somatic mindfulness workshop that subsequently took place in this gallery.

5.3 The Structure of the Somatic Mindfulness Workshop

The somatic mindfulness workshop consisted of three, 2-hour days; each day comprised of three sessions or stages. The first day was composed of pre-meditation practices. The first stage of the first day was an introduction of the workshop that included the purpose of the study, the research questions, the study procedures, a brief definition of mindfulness meditation, and an introduction of Brett Wallace (20 minutes). The second stage was visiting the gallery (20 minutes). I observed and took some photos and video of the participants when they were in the gallery looking at the artworks. In the third stage, I interviewed the participants and asked them to write phenomenological descriptions of their experience (70 minutes). During the second and third days, the participants had the meditation practices with Wallace, and I observed and took some photos of them (20 minutes). Then they visited the gallery after practicing a walking meditation (20 minutes). In the third stage, they had interviews and written descriptions (70 minutes). For the next step, I give more description about the somatic mindfulness workshop before and after practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing.

5.3.1 First Day: Before Meditation (Pre-Meditation Practices)

On the first day of the workshop, I came a little early around 12:30 and went directly to

the front office where I talked with them about the workshop and some arrangements. I spoke with one of the staff members in the front office about preparing the EMA Ruth Russell Dance Studio for the workshop. I also asked if they had some writing boards that I could use in my workshop for the participants. After a while, I glimpsed Wallace was sitting on the bench in the Meadows Gallery waiting for us to start the workshop when the staff member and I went upstairs to the dance studio. I thought I would come back to talk with him after I finished preparing the dance studio for the workshop. While we were upstairs, the staff member turned on the light and helped me to prepare the place for the workshop. The studio was very big for four people. The color of the wall was light orange, and there were also some large wall mirrors on two sides of the dance studio. On the right side, there was a black piano with a bench. On the left side of the studio, there was a door that led to a small lounge and stairs. We found some chairs in the lounge which I borrowed for my participants and Wallace. Also, on the other side of the studio, I found four lamps (standing light units) that I put in different areas after I got the okay from the staff member. I turned on these lamps to give some dim light to the studio which might help in the meditation session.

After a few minutes when I finished preparing the dance studio, I went to check whether any of the participants had arrived and also went to talk with Wallace. When I came down I asked the front office if anybody had come and asked them about the workshop. I looked around to see if any of my participants had shown up, but they still had not come yet. I turned to the Meadows Gallery to meet Wallace; he was still there waiting for me. I talked with him about the workshop and asked him to send me the transcript of the meditation session. I asked him to look at the goal of the study and understand his role for the next days. I told him to focus on the perceptual, sensorial, and spiritual by emphasizing the procedure of the body scan and the

importance of breathing. I asked him to avoid talking about religious aspects that have little to do with my phenomenological study.

Thereafter, we went to the Festival Hall to see if any of the participants had arrived. At that time, I saw Participant A; she was standing outside of the building, in front of the main door, and using her cellphone. I opened the door and greeted her, but she was busy with her cell phone and her face looked tired. After a glance, she looked at me and greeted me back. When we walked inside, I asked her about Participant B, and if she connected with her before coming to the GDAC; she told me Participant B had not. Then I introduced Wallace to Participant A because it was the first time they had met. At that time, I saw Participant B at the main door of the East Wing; I walked there to help her come inside but I could not reach her. I returned to Wallace and Participant A and preferred to stay with them until Participant B found a way to come inside. A few minutes later, Participant B came from the main door of the West Wing. At this time, I asked them to go upstairs to the dance studio to start our first day of the workshop. When we arrived at the dance studio, I asked them to have a seat and introduced Participant B to Wallace. Then I closed the door and asked them if they prefer to use the lamps instead of the light.

5.3.1.1 The First Session: Introduction (1:00-1:15)

I started this first session by talking about the goal of the study, the research questions, and the procedures of the workshop to help them get more information about how the workshop would work. Also, I gave the participants and Wallace a diagram of the workshop which showed the procedure of each day (see Figure B.1), the time allotted for each of the stages, and the data collection that I used. I asked them to bring earbuds with them during the next two days, so they could listen to some audio during the walking meditation. I told them I will send the audio to

them that day. I informed them that we will visit Gough Gallery which has the *Structured Light* exhibition by Colby Parsons, who is an Associate Professor at Texas Women's University. His exhibition, *Structured Light*, explores the relationship between ceramics, light, and shadows. Next, I gave a brief definition of the meaning of the mindfulness of meditation. Then Wallace told them about his role in the meditation session, and he produced an introduction of the guided meditation.

Wallace talked about the importance of meditation, and how it helps us to concentrate on the present moment. He explained how when thoughts come to our mind, we should ignore them and let them go or pass. At that time, I tried to focus on how the participants interacted with Wallace. I noticed they were listening carefully to him, but Participant A looked tired; her skin was pale, and her eyes were sleepy. When Wallace finished his speech, he asked them if they had practiced meditation before and if they have any questions. Participant A responded that she does not have any experience before, while Participant B told him she had practiced meditation before. I had real concerns about the workshop, especially the first day, and about how my participants would interact with the workshop. For example, Participant B teaches meditation and has plenty of experience, which might affect her interaction in the workshop.

5.3.1.2 The Second Session: Visiting the Gallery (1:18-1:40)

After finishing the first session, we went directly to the Gough Gallery, where *Structured Light* was exhibited. At that time, the GDAC was very quiet, and there were no visitors. Also, there was no one in the front office because all the staff had a meeting in the conference room. When we arrived at the Gough Gallery at 1:19, it was very quiet too, and there were no visitors. Next, I told the participants that they would spend 20 minutes in this session, and they could leave before this time if they want to go to the next session.

Both participants went different directions to start their visit of the exhibition. For instance, Participant A went to the right side, and Participant B went to the left side of the gallery. In fact, the participants were committed to their role in the workshop in that they did not make any conversation during this session. Instead, they spent their time focusing on the artworks and the exhibition. They walked very slowly in the gallery and looked mindfully at the artworks. For the next step of this study, I describe how their bodies responded when they encountered the artworks.

Participant A walked in steady steps to the right side of the gallery; she gave a quick glance to the first three artworks until she stopped a few moments in front of Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*). She stood in front of this artwork and stared at it; she crossed her arms, and her body was straight at that time. Then she came close to the artwork and bent her back a little bit forward while keeping the same body posture. She removed her eyeglasses to see some details in the U part of the artwork that the light of the projector reflected on. Then she moved to the next Artwork 5 (Square Grid) while she kept the same posture of crossing her arms, but she did not come very close to this artwork.

At that time, Participant B was looking at Artwork 9 (*Oval Cylinder with Triangle Grid*). Her body was straight, and she crossed her arms similar to Participant A. She headed to Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*); she stood in front of this artwork a few minutes. Then she moved to the right side of the artwork, and she placed her right palm on her face (her cheek) while the left hand held her right arm. Even though she walked slowly to the next artwork, her head and body were still directed at the artwork when her eyes were also looking at it attentively.

After a few seconds, Participant B stood in front of Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*) for a moment, and she was crossing her arms. She walked to the left side of the

artwork, then she came close when she still crossed her arms and bent her back to see inside the cylinder. She moved her hands down a little when she got closer to the artwork and leaned down. Later, she stood straight again in front of the artwork, and she was keeping the same posture of crossing her arms.

Soon afterwards, I saw Participant B was looking at Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*), then she was raising her head up to see how the light came from the projector and reflected on the artwork. She remained looking at the artwork for two minutes. She came very close to the right side of the artwork while she put her right palm on her cheek and her left hand held again the right arm. She bent closer to scrutinize the details of the artwork. Then she sat on the bench and bent her back a little forward when her elbows were rested on her knees. After a few seconds, she changed her body posture and leaned (sat) back and crossed her legs when she was looking at the artwork.

At the same time, Participant A was sitting on the bench too and looking at Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*) while she crossed her legs and put her palm on the bench. Then she came closer to see some details inside the artwork, and she put both hands on the back of her hip. After a few minutes, she moved to Artwork 9 (*Oval Cylinder with Triangle Grid*) while she was keeping the same body posture as before. Later, she got closer to the artwork to look inside the cylinder; she put her left hand on her hip while her right hand held her eyeglass. She took a few steps backward again and kept the same posture of putting her hands on the back of her hip.

I noticed at that moment Participant B was looking at Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*) and putting her two hands on the back of her hip (same as Participant A's body posture). Then she moved to the right side of the artwork to see the rhythmic movement that reflected on the

artwork. After a while, she crossed both hands behind her back, and she stood constantly in this position for a few minutes without any movement in front of this artwork. Later, she moved to Artwork 4 (Declivity #1) and bent her back forward a little bit to see some details on the artwork's surface, which was a part under the U shape. Then I noticed her move to see Artwork 2 (*Double Cane with Hexagon Grid*); she came closer and leaned her head on the left side when she held both of her hands in front of her body.

At this moment, Participant A was sitting on the bench for a few minutes while looking at Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*) and Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*). She crossed her legs and put her hands on her knee while she stretched her back slightly backward. During this time, I found Participant B was squatting and looking carefully to see how the light reflected on Artwork 2 (*Double Cone with Hexagon Grid*) to make the shadow on the wall. She kept this body posture a long time; she put her hands on the floor when she was squatting to see under the artwork. She stood up and leaned her body to the left side to understand how the artist created his artwork and constructed all its parts together, and how he played with the light and shadow. Later, she was squatting again, and she put her left elbow on her knee and anchored (put) the left hand under her chin.

After a while, she moved and sat in front of Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) beside Participant A, who was still observing Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*). Participant B was focusing carefully on the artwork when her back was a little bit straight. She crossed her legs and put her hands on her legs, then later she put her both hands on the bench. In addition, I noticed her back became very straight when she was encountering this artwork. She kept her both hands together on her lap while she was looking mindfully at this artwork without any movement. Thus, she stayed looking at this artwork and keeping the same body posture around eight minutes until the

end of this session.

I turned my attention to find Participant A standing in front of Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) crossing her arms in the back. Then she moved to Artwork 2 (*Double Cone with Hexagon Grid*). She put her left hand behind her back and put her right hand on the wall while holding her eyeglass. She was looking carefully inside the cylinder and bent her back forward. After a while, Participant A went to Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*). She stood on the left side of the artwork and crossed her arms while she put her head on the wall. Then after a few minutes, she moved and sat again in front of Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*); she crossed her legs and held her knee with both hands. At the same time, Participant B was still sitting and looking at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*). After a few seconds, they informed me they were ready to leave the gallery.

The second session finished at 1:40, and we went to the dance studio to start the third session: the interview and the phenomenological description. We started this session at 2:00; I started the interview with Participant B and asked Participant A to write her phenomenological description. Then they switched, and I interviewed Participant A while Participant B wrote the description. The place was very quiet, which helped us to discuss and talk without any distraction. I asked Participant B to sit on the upper left side of the room, beside the other door, to have some privacy and allow Participant A to have a free place to write. I recorded our interviews and used an application that turns the voice to text, which is called Speecky. Later I found this application didn't help me as I expected. Thus, I decided to avoid using this application for the other interviews and decided to stick with the audio recordings.

5.3.2 Second Day: After Meditation (Post-Meditation Practices)

The room was quiet, the door was closed, and the lamps (standing light units) were in

different areas in the room to provide a mood of quietness and contemplation. I came a few minutes before the session started to see where I could put the camera to video the participants while they practiced the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing with Wallace. On the previous day, Participant A suggested that it would be a good idea for me to use a camera during the whole second session; then I thought it is better if I video the first session too. When I was trying to find where I can put the camera to record the session, Participant B came at that time and helped me to find a place for the camera. After a few minutes, Wallace and Participant A came to the dance studio, and I asked them to have a seat. I tried to sit in a place where I could watch them without causing any distractions for them while I wrote down some notes about their physical movements. Thus, I preferred to sit on the right side of Wallace's seat. At that moment, Wallace and the participants were ready to start practicing the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing.

5.3.2.1 The First Session: Meditation Practices (1:00-1:17)

It was one o'clock in the afternoon when Wallace asked them if they were ready to start practicing meditation; then he started reading a meditation script (see Script C.2). The participants were listening carefully and relaxing gradually when I was writing down everything that I heard or saw with some effort to be quiet and silent to allow them to engage in the meditation session.

Despite my attempts to keep the place quiet, I could not control the external factors that might affect the participants' interaction and engagement with the meditation process. For example, sometimes the noise became very loud that came from downstairs visitors who were in the Festival Hall. I thought about how my participants dealt with these loud voices. In addition, I heard sirens when Wallace read his meditation script. I could not focus on my participants at that

time; I just thought about how all these exotic effects might be playing a role in this study. I was wondering whether the participants engaged in the meditation process effectively, or whether these external noises distracted them as they distracted me. After a while, I became aware of an important fact: that I should focus on my participants, and how they engage with the meditation practices instead of thinking about these distractions. I was reminded that I must bracket any external factors when I want to observe the participants.

Returning to the session and looking again to the participants, I noticed Participant B having difficulty in engaging quickly in the meditation and in achieving a stillness of mood. She was moving her head, hands, and legs constantly, as she was in a stressful state. This was one of the concerns that I considered before the workshop that Participant B has a good experience with meditation as a leader. Although Participant B closed her eyes, I could notice her pupils were moving which might have indicated she was actively thinking of something and not quite relaxed. Also, I found Participant B was moving her hands continuously. However, in the end, she placed one hand above the other one with her palms (forehand) up.

In addition, Participant A put both of her hands on her legs with her palms (forehand) down. At that time, her head was raised a little bit higher with a slight smile on her lips; she appeared relaxed, without agitation or stress in the body. She kept the same body posture the entire time she practiced the guided meditation with Wallace, which was around 15 minutes. Of course, my observations cannot enter directly into her state of mind, but I made note of her body posture and would check with her during the interview to make sure she was indeed relaxed.

In the end of the meditation session, I heard Wallace ask them to count backward from ten to one. He said that:

- 10, 9, 8 your body and mind are totally relaxed and receptive.

- 7, 6, 5 your thoughts are quiet, focused and free of limiting beliefs.
- 4, 3, 2, 1, you are totally open to the inspiration and creativity that your source would impart to you right now. There is nothing you have to do now, but relax, listen, and absorb the inspiration and healing that flows from your stillness.

Wallace asked them to focus on their breathing in and out; he wanted them to be in the current moment and feel their bodies and senses. He ended his speech with these words "You feel the emotions of the artists you observe, and you are aware of the emotions that arise in you due to your intense focus."

Silences, stillness, and relaxation covered the environment, but the sound of the air-conditioning spoiled the mood of contemplation. Also, the sound in the Festival Hall raised again with the voice of the presenter, which pulled me away from the observations and caused me to ask myself whether this noisiness affected the process of meditation practices. Moreover, the sound of the clock behind the participants distracted my attention elsewhere. It reminded me of when I practiced meditation with Wallace before in the same room, and how the sound of the clock disturbed me at that time. This caused me to wonder if this sound could distract the participants too and hinder them from practicing meditation. I realized the fact that all of these external influences prevented me from observing the participants before they hindered my participants from being in the present moment and engaging in meditation practices.

As a phenomenological researcher, I needed to bracket my expectations, anxieties, concerns, and preferences. Therefore, one way to bracket myself was that I attended the open reception of the *Structured Light* exhibition by Colby Parsons in the Gough Gallery in order to get a previous background of the artist and his artworks, and I wanted to see how the visitors interacted with the exhibition. Later, I asked myself how I could overcome the limits of my own subjectivity and selfhood when I am in the workshop with the participants. It was impossible to bracket myself totally. I was a hostage in my assumptions, concerns, and preferences; I was a

hostage in the present moment. I understood the fact that I could not bracket myself completely, but instead that I could bridle myself, my subjectivity, and perspectives as best as possible, constantly reminding myself to pay attention to the participants, their movements, their bodies, and their experiences.

At the end of practicing meditation, Wallace asked the participants to open their eyes when they were ready. I turned off the camera that I used to record the meditation session. Then I asked them to practice a walking meditation by listening to a linked video of the "Guided Walking Meditation for Mindfulness" that I sent the previous day. Participant A told me she could not use the linked video because her connection was slow, and she needed Wi-Fi (wireless). I recorded the linked video, then sent an audio recording to the participants.

Participant A practiced the walking meditation in the dance studio, while Participant B went to the Meadows Gallery to practice the walking meditation. Participant B told me she preferred to leave the dance studio and find another place to practice the walking meditation because she needed more space to move. I told them to avoid practicing the walking meditation in the Festival Hall because there were many visitors that came for another event and this might distract and hinder them from practicing meditation. Indeed, I did not observe them when they were practicing the walking meditation because each participant was alone in different places.

I feel that if I had observed them during the walking session, I might have distracted them when they were walking, especially since their eyes are open during this kind of meditation. This was different from practicing the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing when they closed their eyes and sat on the chair to be more relaxed and still. Walking meditation helped them to move and see the world around them and to connect with others. Therefore, I did not want to interject myself in their worlds while they tried to make the connections with other

objects (artworks, gallery, people, and other objects); I did not want to be one of the objects of their attention.

I went directly to the Gough Gallery; at that time, the gallery was very quiet and was not crowded with visitors. Even though there were some people in the Festival Hall, this did not affect the participants or the process of my workshop when they were in the Gough Gallery. In addition, I wanted to install the two cameras and try to find a proper place that helped me to record from different directions in the exhibition. It was necessary to find a good place with a suitable height and an appropriate angle to record the movements of the participants when they were in the exhibition. I searched a little bit around the gallery to decide where to put the cameras and found a door that leads to the studio room. I closed the door because I did not want to make any mess in the place. Finally, I decided to put the cameras on the table of Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*). This location of the cameras helped me to record from two different directions where the shape of the gallery is an inverted "L." After a few minutes, I was ready and waited for the participants in the gallery to start this session.

5.3.2.2 The Second Session: Visiting the Gallery (1:38-1:56)

After they were practicing the walking meditation, the participants came to the gallery and Participant A asked me what they should do today; I told her the same as yesterday. I informed them that they have 20 minutes to be in the gallery, but if they need to leave early, it's fine and is up to them. Participant A was walking slowly with few steps and after a while, she looked up at the ceiling. Then she moved her attention to the left side of the gallery where there was a balcony. The balcony had a metal handrail with an iced glass. The light of the balcony was opened today. Participant A took a few more steps forward; sometimes, she looked at the balcony and other times looked at Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*). After a while, she sat in front of

Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) and looked at it for five minutes while she crossed her arms. Later, she stretched her body slightly back while she put her hands on the bench to anchor (support) her body.

At that time, Participant B stared carefully at the two artworks: Artwork 1 (*Cylinder with Hexagon Grid*) and Artwork 2 (*Double Cone with Hexagon Grid*). For more details, she moved to Artwork 1 (*Cylinder with Hexagon Grid*) and looked at it from different directions while she put her hands in her pocket. Moreover, she moved her head to the right and left sides in order to observe some details inside the artworks. After that, she moved to the bibliography of the artist that was on the left side of the gallery (I am not sure if she looked at it the first day). Later, Participant B stopped in front of Artwork 9 (*Oval Cylinder with Triangle Grid*). She put her hands in her dress pocket and swung (wobbled) them right and left. Then, she moved to Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) and sat in front of this piece. After a few moments, she changed the direction of her whole body to look at Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*). She leaned forward and placed her elbows on her knees while the silence swept (covered) the place.

On the other side, Participant A was looking at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) and was relaxed, where she put her hands on the bench and crossed her legs. She moved her eyes to different artworks at that time, such as Artworks 5, 6, 7, and 8. Then, she walked to Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) and Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*). Participant A stood a moment in front of Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*). She put her hands in the pocket when her body was straight and steady for some time, but she was a bit distant from this artwork. She went directly to Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*); she came closer and took off her eyeglasses when she bent her back forward slightly to see the movement or the surface of the artwork.

Participant A moved to Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*), and she was

reading the label of the artwork; then she sat for a short while and went back to the artwork. She put her left shoulder on the wall when she was looking at the artwork. A few moments later, she moved to Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) and stood a short distance in front of it for a short time when she crossed her arms. She walked in front of the artwork and put her right hand behind the artwork to reflect its shadow on her hand for a few seconds. Then she moved to Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*); she came closer and closer when she put her hands in her pockets for two moments with the same body posture.

At the same time, Participant B was sitting for five minutes on the bench and looking mindfully at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) without any movement to get more stillness. However, sometimes she was making some physical practices and stretching her body, arms, and shoulders. Also, she moved her head on the right and left sides when she was looking at the artwork. Participant B stood up and wandered around the gallery without focusing her attention on any specific artwork. At this time, one visitor came with a staff member to the gallery. I did not want to video them, so I directed the cameras to another direction to avoid including them in the video record. I was worried about whether they might distract the participants. However, after a few seconds, the staff member recognized I was observing my participants in the gallery. He apologized and asked his visitor to leave the gallery.

I turned my attention again to the participants; I saw Participant B was standing in front of Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*). She moved her right hand up the artwork to reflect the light of the projector on her hand. However, she put her hands quickly in her pockets, as soon as she felt someone was watching her. She moved to Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) and stood in the right side of the artwork; then she walked around the gallery quietly. At that time, Participant A was focusing on Artwork 9 (*Oval Cylinder with Triangle Grid*) where she placed her hands in her pocket and

put her head and left shoulder on the wall for few moments to see inside the artwork. At the end of this session, Participant A told me that she was done with this session and wanted to move to the next one; this was exactly after nineteen minutes and ten seconds. We took 15 minutes break after finishing this session and moved to the dance studio to start the third session that includes the interviews and phenomenological description.

5.3.3 Third Day: After Meditation (Post-Meditation Practices)

It was the third day of the somatic mindfulness workshop. I tried to solve or think more about some problems that faced me in the first and second days. For example, even if using the steady cameras in my study might help me to record the whole session in more detail, I did not put any in the first and second sessions of the third day. I recognized that the fixed camera could not only distract the participants, especially when they were visiting the gallery, but it also distracted me from observing my participants by checking the cameras several times to be sure they were working. Moreover, I was watching my steps when I was with the participants in the gallery because I felt my presence might affect their ways of encountering the visual art. For instance, I noticed how they changed their reactions when they felt somebody (the researcher) was watching them.

During the first and second days, I was not satisfied with myself because I was somehow trying to guide this study in the direction of my pre-existing assumptions, which was that practicing meditation was an effective way to help my participants when they encountered the visual art. In fact, I decided, at that time, to make note of my internal dialogues, assumptions, and worries in order to bracket some of the perspectives, expectations, experiences, and concerns that I felt were continually getting in the way of observing and describing events. I listened to the interviews and read the written descriptions of the second day in order to pull out some details

that the participants indicated that might improve the third day.

5.3.3.1 The First Session: Meditation Practices (1:12-1:25)

The session started ten minutes later because one of the participants came late. The meditation practices were the same as the second day. This was another reason that I did not video this session. The studio was very quiet and equipped with some lamps which might help the participants for relaxation and contemplation. Not only was the dance studio quiet, but also the GDAC was very quiet. There were not as many visitors as the previous day. I felt more comfortable that there were no distractions that could affect my participants when they were practicing the guided and walking meditation with breathing, or when they were in the gallery. I felt less distracted as well when I observed the participants. Moreover, the clock beats did not disturb me this time because the participants said the sound did not bother them; instead of that, Participant B told me this sound helped her to be in the current moment and avoiding thinking of her body pains.

Wallace's voice broke the silence in the room when he repeated the same meditation script that he recited the previous day. I turned my attention to the participants to see if there were any changes from today and yesterday. Participant A reacted the same as yesterday: she was in a state of stillness all the time. Indeed, she did not move and kept her same body posture as the previous day. For instance, she put her palms (forehand) down on her legs and raised her head a little higher with a slight smile when she closed her eyes. On the other hand, Participant B moved less than yesterday. Despite this, I noticed her eyeball was moving from time to time possibly indicating rapid thought. Also, one of her hands was above the other one, similar to the previous day, but closer to each other. Depending on my observation, I think Participant B was in a state of tension, but later she began to be relaxed and engaged in the meditation process.

When Wallace finished his session, he asked them if they were ready to open their eyes. Participant A opened her eyes first and smiled, then she looked at me and at Wallace. A few seconds later, Participant B opened her eyes and moved her body a little bit; then she raised her head up and looked at us. Wallace left the room after saying goodbye to the participants and me. Then I asked them to start the walking meditation before visiting the gallery. Participant A practiced the walking meditation in the dance studio, and Participant B practiced it in the Meadows Gallery. On my way to the Gough Gallery, I met some visitors in the Festival Hall who had talked with me during the opening reception of the *Structured Light* gallery. One of the visitors told me about the exhibition in the Meadows Gallery; we talked about how this show did present the daily life that we haven't seen or recognized before. After a while, I told them I needed to leave when Participant B showed up and went directly to the Gough Gallery; then I saw Participant A come to the gallery too.

5.3.3.2 The Second Session: Visiting the Gallery (1:40-1:56)

In the beginning of this session, I noticed that Participant B stood in front of Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*); her body was straight and steady without any movement. Then when she was encountering with this artwork, she made some physical practices with her body. For instance, she flexed (bent) her right leg back by holding it with both hands while she stood on the left leg. After that, she switched these physical practices and she bent her left leg by holding it with both of her hands and stood on the right leg. Though, she stayed at the same distance from the artwork, she bent her back forward a little bit with just one step forward of her left leg to look more closely to the artwork and its details. At that time, Participant A was looking at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) from the left side when she put both of her hands behind her back from a little distance away. After a few seconds, she came closer to the artwork where she still put her hands

behind her back. Later, she moved to Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) and kept the same body posture of holding her hands behind her back and standing closer than before.

Participant B was standing for a while in front of Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) without any movements or physical reactions, such as what she did when she was encountering Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*). However, when she was standing in front of Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*), she also did some physical practices, such as stretching her hands and arms. She pulled her right hand to the left side while the right hand was held by the left hand and vice versa. Then she put her two hands above her head by holding them together when she was looking at the artwork and standing at the same distance.

Furthermore, I turned my eyes at Participant A when she bent her back forward and put her right hand, which held her eyeglasses, on the wall and the other hand behind her back when she was trying to look inside Artwork 9 (*Oval Cylinder with Triangle Grid*). Then she moved to Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*) and put her hands on her hip. She was looking mindfully to the motion of the reflecting light from the projector on the artwork surface with a good distance that let her observe the artwork. After that, she moved to Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) and put her right hand above the artwork in order to see the reflection of the light of the projector on her hand. She walked a few steps to the left side of the artwork then put her right hand on her hip when she was leaning on the wall.

At that time, I saw Participant B was standing from the right side of Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*) when she was crossing her arms and looking closer to see the inside of the artwork. Next, she sat on the bench to encounter Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) when her back was straight and held both hands together. Furthermore, she bent her back forward a little bit and put her right leg on the left leg when putting her elbows on her legs and held the two

hands together for a few moments. Next, she stood up and moved to Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) but from a somewhat far distance. She was squatting and looking at Artwork 3 then she turned her attention to Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*) by keeping the same body posture.

At the same time, Participant A moved to Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) when she stood from the right side of the artwork and lent on the wall by putting her left hand on her hip and stepping the right leg forward. She came closer to the artwork when she put her right hand on the wall while keeping her same body posture of putting her left hand on her hip. I turned my attention to Participant B again to see she was moving and looking at Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*). She was looking at the artwork a while when her body was straight a little bit, and she was holding both of her hands together. After a while, she sat in front of Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) for around four minutes. At that time, she bent her back forward by putting her elbows on her knees; she was looking down on the floor. Then she moved her body a little to look at other artworks, such as Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) and Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*) when she was crossing her legs and holding both arms to her body.

Shortly before that, Participant A was sitting and encountering Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*); she was leaning backward, putting her hands on the bench, and crossing her legs. Moreover, she moved to the right side of Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) while she put her hands behind her back and came closer little by little to the artwork. Then, she turned her attention to Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*), and she took off her eyeglass to see some details when she put her left hand on her hip. After a while, she sat on the bench looking at Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) again. She put her hands on the bench and crossed her legs. While Participant B was sitting on the bench and looking at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*), she was crossing her legs and holding both of her hands near to her body.

Participant A went to Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*), and she was standing on the left side of the work. She was looking closely at some details that appeared on the surface of the artwork when she put her hands behind her back and held her eyeglasses by the right hand while the left hand held her right arm. After a while, I saw Participant B was encountering Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*), and she was looking closely to the details on the U shape (the light area) when her body was straight and steady. At the end of this session, Participant A told me she was ready to leave the gallery; then after one minute later, Participant B left the gallery with Participant A to start the next session in the dance studio.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT/DISSCUSSION

6.1 Collaboration between the Personal Meaning-Making and the Social Meaning-Making

In the previous work of this dissertation, I provided a personal meaning-making, a wide description of the phenomenological observation of my participants and their bodies when they were encountering the visual art and moving in the gallery. I noticed there were certain patterns (gestures) that I was seeing in what they were doing, and they kept these movements continuous over and over. Next, after summarizing the most important moment that attracted my attention in the gallery, I want to summarize what they said about their perceptual and sensorial experience in the interviews and the written descriptions to get the social meaning-making of their experience (see Script A.1). In fact, I want to explore how my personal meaning-making and their social meaning-making (Aspers, 2009; Dortins, 2002; Stelter, 2010) fit together in order to explore the fundamental meaning of this experience.

6.2 Before Meditation (Pre-Meditation Practices): The First Day

Depending on my phenomenological observation of the first day, I looked at some interesting details of the participants' bodily and perceptual reactions in the interviews and the written descriptions. For example, when I was observing Participant A in the gallery, I recognized some signs of tiredness in her body posture, further verified in our interview. Specifically, she put both hands on the back of her hip, and also, she stretched her back slightly backward. At that time, I was worried if her tiredness might prohibit her from engaging with the perceptual and sensorial experience in the workshop.

In our interviews, Participant A told me several times she did not pay attention to her body, movements, feelings, and breathing; she said that "I didn't pay attention, but um...no I

don’t think it affects my body.” She gave me the reason of why she did not pay attention at that time because of tiredness that prohibited her from engaging in the gallery. She confirmed that “I don’t pay attention because I’m tired.” Moreover, Participant A said she felt calm, but she didn’t pay attention when I asked her where in your body you felt calm. I returned her attention back to the experience itself, then this experience revealed something she did not notice before.

P. A: I feel calm when I see water flowing; you know?

MB: Then where in your body did you feel calm?

P. A: I didn’t pay attention...um but if I have to think about it; I guess here.

MB: Here, in your shoulder.

P. A: Yeah...in my shoulder. Maybe associated with...I don’t know.

She listened to the call from the artwork without any consciousness of how this call affected her perceptual and embodied experience in the world.

Indeed, Participant A found these artworks and the exhibition helped her in some way; she stated that “I don’t know this is helpful but….I... uhhh since I felt tired...sit. But also, the artwork makes me want to sit. So, um...it is very calming and the noise from the video was calming as well.” Because she was tired, she was seeking calm everywhere, which called her to relax and sleep. The artworks gave her body what she needed, which was being calm and relaxed; she said that “I think about the art and not pay attention to myself.” Participant A focused more on the artworks and the exhibition than her body and senses because she found what her body needs from the world around her – calmness. I asked her to describe her bodily experience with any kind of concept, metaphor, word, picture, or phrase. She responded that “Bodily experience...um.. calming;” she found calmness everywhere in the gallery.

Participant A described how the artworks and the gallery called her to be calm and

mindful; she said that “The videos make you be there to observe for longer time.” She felt the artworks and the video wanted her to be still and called her to be meditative for a long time. Also, the reflection of the movement on the artwork affected her physical experience and attracted her attention; she pointed out that “I don’t know but my body when movement...you want to be there for longer just to see how it changes.” Furthermore, these artworks called her to come and look very closely at the details and how the artist made the artwork. She told me, “So that’s why I’m looking inside it. To see how it’s made;” also, she said that “they have lot of details that make you look everywhere.” These kinds of artworks invited her to come and see their details which led her to be in a meditative mood by thinking about how the artist made these art pieces.

There were many factors that helped her to be in a meditative mood. She stated why she wanted to sit a long time and look at the artworks; she highlighted that “I think it was because the bench was there. Also, because it is a video. Yeah. It’s a video and it has movement you want to see what happens next. Also, because I know I will be coming back. I know that I will have time to see details.” The artworks called her to sit on the bench and look mindfully; the artworks asked her to come closely to see their details; the artworks asked her to change her body postures to see how the artist made them. For instance, I asked her if there were a relationship between her body postures and the artworks, and she answered, “I don’t think so. It’s more convenient. For example, when I wanted to get closer it makes sense to take off my glasses because it was close. When there is an inside you know you have to look in the inside. When there’s no inside then you don’t have to go close. And when there’s a bench….yeah.” Thus, the artworks affected her bodily and perceptual experience by calling her to have different patterns in order to connect with them.

I noticed that Participant A was walking slowly in the gallery and looking mindfully at the artworks. She came close to the artworks and looked inside them; she made some changes in her body's reactions when she encountered these artworks. Some of the meditative body postures that she used in the gallery were crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, قائم/مستقيم), leaning her body or part of her body on the wall (maeal, مائل), bending her back forward (monhani, منحني), and putting her hands on the back of her hip. These different postures of her body were a way to adjust herself to connect with the artworks in order to get a deep meaning of this experience. She pointed out that "I know I will come back and every time I will notice something different;" she spent more time in the gallery looking slowly at the artworks and making a conversation with these pieces to understand them more.

Even though she said she did not know if the artworks affected her movements, I noticed she had a lot of gestures that helped her to make a connection with the artworks, but some of these gestures had a sign of tiredness. I noticed she preferred to sit on the bench and look at the video artworks more than others because of the movement of the artwork. I considered moving the bench to elsewhere because it might affect her body reactions since she preferred to sit on the bench. Later, I recognized that I should leave the gallery as they found it on the first day without any interference from me as a researcher.

Indeed, both participants understood how to enter a meditative mood by practicing certain meditative activities that helped them to bracket their internal (thoughts and feelings) and external (environment) distractions. For example, they cleared their minds from any distractions by avoiding any verbal or physical communication with each other in order to engage in the meditative mood. Furthermore, there were several elements that helped Participant A to engage in the meditative mood, as she mentioned in her interview and written description, such as the

artworks, the details in the artworks, videos, the noise from the videos, the movement, the setup of the artworks, the bench, having enough time (20 minutes), and the darkness. Moreover, she liked the Gough gallery because it was small (in terms of the number of the artworks), L shaped, dark, and calming. All these elements helped her spend more time engaging in the meditative mood, which affected her visual and perceptual experience.

Next, I provide some important moments of Participant B's visual and physical experience when she encountered the artworks in the gallery. "I was feeling...um... the room...I was very aware of how quiet the room was. So, I was only hear us walking around," Participant B said. Because the room was quiet and had some sort of dimness, as well as no additional visitors in the gallery at that time, she could relax and listen to our steps on the floor when we were walking around the gallery. Here I noticed the importance of letting my participants engage in a meditative mood. Participant B recognized how the artist used the shadows and lights in his exhibition everywhere, which caught her attention visually. Looking slowly and walking mindfully helped her not just go beyond recognizing the environment around her but also, she recognized herself as an object, who wanted to make a connection with the world.

Participant B stated that "I started to notice maybe after 5 or 10 minutes; I started to notice shadows besides the work of art. So, shadows from the cords, shadows from the tables. Shadows from us walking around." I was asking myself why she noticed the environment after 5 or 10 minutes. I tried to find the answer from her movement, such as coming and going back, by trying to adjust her body posture in order to discover something new. I saw that she found her body as a part of this exhibition; it was a way to start projecting herself in the world. Participant B was really aware of her body and senses in the exhibition; she asked her body to move on purpose, which helped her to appreciate her body, senses, and the world around her. She pointed

out that:

> I was very aware of being watched. So, I would move but then I would think about oh I just moved this way because… why did...so I would think about why I was standing or why I was moving. So, I would try not to do that, but I was aware that someone was watching my body language...so that was interesting.

Before I started the workshop, I was worried about if the participants accepted me, as a phenomenological researcher, observing them and watching their body reactions when they were encountering visual art, and if this would somehow affect the fundamental meanings of this study. I asked Participant B about this because she mentioned it in her interviews; she told me this affected her way of moving "a little bit" in the gallery. I agreed with her that my presence in the gallery disrupted her movement to be free in her world, but also it might help her to be more aware of her body and others in the gallery. She highlighted how she was interacting when I observed her in the gallery; she stated that:

> If I was sitting like this...if I was sitting still looking at something and out of the corner of my eye, I saw someone taking a picture, then I'm going to try to stay at that position. So, they can take a picture.

In fact, she noted that she was moving in this gallery naturally and "wasn't moving differently." However, she told me "I was just aware somebody observing me;" I noticed that she was waiting for me to take pictures of her when I saw some bodily reactions that caught my attention.

I was excited to know more about her body movements when I was observing her in the gallery, which was consistent with her body reactions in any other galleries, as she stated; she told me that:

> So, moving around the piece, you know, looking at it from different angles, looking at it more than once, leaving and coming back to the same piece. Um...becoming still because something catches your attention. Or kind a zoning off. All these things are what I normally do in the gallery.

These were other signs of how she projected herself in the world; she went and came back again

and again until she found something interesting; this was the same as what Participant A told me about her perceptual experience when she went and came back to see something different.

Participant B posed a great thought that our body reactions depend on what kind of artwork we observe. Every artwork calls you in different way; the artworks in this gallery affected how she adjusted her body in a certain way. For example, sometimes she needed "to get very low on the floor you can sort of take on the perspective of the light and look through the sculpture and see how the light would travel through." Moreover, she gave a clear view about how her body postures change if she looks at paintings; she stated that "if I am looking at a painting, I don't have to get to the ground like that. So, if I'm going to move physically depending on my space and what works I'm looking at...yeah." Participant B understood how to attune her body with these art pieces so that she might discover something beyond the visible world.

By spending more time looking and walking, Participant B adjusted her body several times to see the artworks in different ways; she recognized this fact: "And at first, I liked that but the more time I spent in the gallery…. I shouldn't say I liked it; it was mesmerizing… like it drew me in. I couldn't stop looking because of the movement." She gave a clear description of how her intentionality shifted when she was looking at some artworks, Artwork 6 (Materiality of Light #4) and Artwork 7 (Landscape #1), which had a moving light, repetition, and rhythm. Later, she felt these artworks weren't calming anymore, and they become annoying to her; she said, "Like it didn't seem as special as when I first saw it." However, she "felt bored with it" and she "didn't want to look at it anymore;" because of these annoying artworks, she tried to search to find something else that attracted her attention.

After a few seconds of looking around, she stood in front of Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*);

this art piece called to her and asked her to come and look. She pointed out that "the more I looked around it was the grid, the piece with the grid. I don't know that one! I thought like I didn't sit with it longer." Indeed, I noticed she was spending a long time looking at Artwork 5; it seemed to me she found something interesting that caught her attention deeply. Later, I asked her about her body reaction when she encountered artworks, particularly with Artwork 5. In fact, I observed that she was staring at this artwork and after a while I saw her body posture changed; I noticed her back became very straight, more so than before, and I decided to ask her about her bodily and visual experience. We had a conversation together about her experience:

> MB: But in this one (picture of Artwork 5) I found the posture of your body is different from another one. What do you think about this one?
>
> P. B: Because I was sitting up straighter? I don't know. I mean I am aware that I was slouching sometimes and sometimes I sit up straight.

Furthermore, Participant B didn't remember the moment when she made her back straight; she was sitting in front of this artwork around eight minutes. When I asked her about this moment, she stated that:

> I'm very aware of my movement but I didn't… I'm not able to attach it to a specific thing I look at. I just shift. It is hard for me to sit long in one position. Because my muscles get sore so I'm always moving around. So, I don't know. I cannot remember that moment specifically as that being another reason.

She stated how this piece was calming, which helped her to move to a meditative mood by looking slowly for a long time. "So that piece made me… I don't know. I wanted to look at it longer," Participant B asked herself; she felt something else behind this art piece that called her to come, look, and make dialog with it.

In addition, I asked her if she had any kind of concept, metaphor, word, picture, or phrase to describe her bodily experience with the artworks; she described that "there is a sort of balance of movement and stillness," "which is again something I normally do in a gallery." She

understood how to make a balance (movement and stillness) in her body reactions to get in a comfortable position. She was walking around the gallery looking at some of these artworks and making different meditative body postures, such as making her body and back straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), crossing her arms (metkatef,متكتف), bending her back (monhani, منحني), and squatting (moqarfes, مقرفص). However, she remained in one of her body postures - making her back very straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم)- when she was sitting and looking at Artwork 5, around eight minutes until the end of this session.

Furthermore, she indicated an important thought about the artworks: specifically, that they didn't ask the viewer to make an interpretation because they weren't narrative. Thus, "because of the nature of the work," it gave her mind enough space to think and to be in a state of mind when she was looking at the artwork. She clarified this idea, stating, "I am starting in my mind to think about my own ideas and make connections and brainstorm." Even the artworks did not ask for interpretation, but they invited her to come and look in order to make a connection between the body and the mind. In the end of our interview, I changed my questions to know more about her breathing process and if it was affected by looking at these artworks. She told me "it didn't really affect my breathing;" however, she understood how she can relax her body by sitting down and breathing (exhaling). Participant B described how she practiced that in the gallery "Because my shoulder is usually tense, so I noticed when I sit down and exhale, my shoulder is able to relax a little bit more." She was really aware and appreciated herself, her body, and other objects around her; "So, I was aware of not wanting to encroach on Participant A's face wanting to give some distance. But in museums and galleries, I'm always very aware of my body." In fact, I was asking myself some questions: one of them was how she was aware of herself and the world around her that helped her to be in a meditative mood.

6.3 After Meditation (Post-Meditation Practices): The Second Day

After greeting Participant A, I asked her if she felt better than yesterday, but she told me she was still tired. In fact, I again questioned whether her tiredness might prevent her from engaging in meditation activities and on what level that could affect the result of this study. Participant A told me she has never practiced any kind of meditations before this time. During the meditation session, I noticed Participant A appeared relaxed and still in her whole body until the end of the session, and she confirmed that with me, saying, "It felt relaxing, very peaceful, and self-aware." I recognized that she kept the same body posture for fifteen minutes when she practiced the guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing with Wallace. It was impossible to know about her feelings until I shared with her this experience to reveal some meaningful details.

Moreover, I was curious to know in which part of her body she felt when she practiced the guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing; she added that "I didn't feel a specific part, but I like the reference to skin; because you don't really feel the skin if you don't touch anything." I was excited to have more details about her physical experience by making a connection between the self and the world around her, and she described this feeling:

> Normally, you don't feel the skin unless you touch something. You can be aware of food or something. But you don't think with your skin. But it's adjusted, your scalp is the skin of the head. It makes think of the skin. My whole body.

I liked what she told me about her perceptual experience to be aware of the environment around you. However, I was wondering what her mind was doing at that time, as a kind of connection between the body and the mind. She stated that "I don't remember, but I was trying to follow what he said, but I don't have a memory of that time in my mind." Later, she gave me a great description of what her mind was doing at that time when she told me her mind was "drifting."

Furthermore, I asked her more questions about whether her mind was related to or distracted from her body at that time; she said that "well in the beginning, I was distracted, but in the end, I wanted to concentrate." She became aware of her body and mind by concentrating on the present moment. During the meditation session, I noticed how her body was very relaxed, and she put her hands on her legs with her palms forehand down; her head was raised a little bit higher with a slight smile on her lips. When I asked her about engaging in the meditation process, she stated she didn't remember herself in the meditation process; she pointed out that "Only at the beginning, I felt I had to control my breath. But later myself disappeared from memory." She described the process of meditation, stating, "it was easy. The chair is good for that." As a phenomenological researcher, I spent some time preparing the dance studio for my participants before they were starting the somatic mindfulness workshop in order to help them engage in the meditative mood.

After practicing the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing, the participants practiced a walking meditation; I asked Participant A if this kind of practice helped her. She didn't like the music because it was very dramatic, but she liked the words. She was dissatisfied with the voice of the mindfulness audio recording that didn't help her engage with the walking meditation in a proper way. However, she liked the walking meditation practice because she didn't need to focus on a specific thing. The walking meditation helped her in a way to be aware of the environment around her; she noticed different things in the Gough gallery this time, such as "the structures that were on the ceiling," "the second floor," "the railing," and "the balcony." It was interesting to hear more about her visual and perceptual experience by having this conversation with her:

MB: Then you didn't notice the stuff yesterday?

P. A: No. I mean I wasn't looking up. I was looking at the art.

MB: Then today you didn't look at the art?

P. A: I do look at the art also but…

MB: But you spent the time, same as yesterday, or...you can say...what the purpose for looking at the ceiling and the second floor while yesterday you didn't do it?

P. A: I didn't because I went to the art yesterday, and I knew where the art is and that's where I looked. But today because I knew the pieces of the art... like I knew the information, the label. I knew; I had known the basic structure of the pieces. So, I was free to go because or to just be there and enjoy it.

Here, I agreed with her of how this kind of experience offered a space for her to practice freedom and pleasure; she told me that "like you move differently," and spend more time looking attentively around and walking slowly "without a reason, without a goal." She stated that "I saw the structure yesterday. I saw the geometric shape, everything. That's why I looked inside yesterday but today it feels...it looks like something else. Like a metaphor interpretation." By looking and walking mindfully, she increased her visual and perceptual experience; she saw a "human's face," beside what she has already seen in the previous day, a "creek" and a "waterfall." Participant A kept doing some meditative body postures when she was visiting the gallery, such as crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), leaning her body or part of her body on the wall (maeal, مائل) bending her back forward (monhani, منحني), and putting her hands on the back of her hip.

Furthermore, she didn't know if practicing meditation affected her breathing, body posture, and movement, and if she did anything different from yesterday. She stated she didn't pay attention to her body, but paid attention more to the art. She described her breathing, which was "like a regular tide." However, she confirmed some changes in her perception when she was in the gallery; she stated, "But again, yesterday I didn't look up, but today I did. I noticed things

that are up high. But they are not art." This let me think about why she did not look at the art and spent time looking at something else, so I asked her what the reason behind that was. She said "I don't know if it's meditation or because it's the second time. Maybe the walking meditation did the effect. But I can't say that it was the reason." I agreed with her that it was difficult to say that the reason for her perceptual experience was just because of a specific reason. Indeed, it was a set of many factors, being still and silent when looking slowly and walking mindfully around the gallery for three days, which helped Participant A to expose some details and things that were covered in the previous day.

Later, she told me freedom, wandering, and pleasure were the concepts that embodied her experience, as she indicated, "I was more like wandering. I have seen all the pieces, so I was free to do whatever." Moreover, I asked her again about her visual experience and if there was any difference between the two days; she responded that she felt "more relaxed," when she "was looking at the art, it was relaxing." By asking her in which part of her body she felt relaxed, she said that "Everywhere; but especially, my neck. I don't know, maybe," but she could not remember if it was similar or different from yesterday. In addition, some of the artworks attracted her attention because of including the video, the loops, and the movement. These features induced her to spend plenty of time looking carefully at these artworks to become more relaxed.

At that time, she noticed how the place was connected to the artworks; she asserted that "the bench looks similar to the artwork." I was curious to know more about her experience, and if she was aware of any change in the setting at all after the meditation; she emphasized that "Yeah because I noticed things upstairs. I saw things in the main lobby that are very high. I saw the paintings in the hallway before going into the Gough gallery. I saw.... we went to see the

other rooms." In sum, practicing meditation with Wallace helped her to be relaxed and aware of the environment around her. In addition, walking around the gallery and looking slowly at the visual art for three days helped her to develop her visual, bodily, and perceptual experience.

After conducting the interview with Participant A, I asked Participant B about her feelings during the meditation session. She stated that "I was able to slow down my breath." However, she told me when she was still and meditating, she became hypersensitive to sensations in her body. Participant B gave me more details about that feeling by highlighting that "It was a little overwhelming. Like my chest felt really tight. And my stomach hurt a little, so I had to sort of pull myself out a little bit because it was too versatile." She pointed out how these physical feelings distracted her from engaging quickly in the meditative process. Furthermore, she has always practiced meditation, which helped her to be aware of her body and senses. Hence, her meditative experience might help me to gain more meaningful descriptions about the connection between her feelings and thoughts during the meditation process.

Moreover, she understood her body and senses, and how to be in a present moment. For example, she shifted her attention to something else around her, instead of focusing on her body's distraction during the meditation practice. Participant B pointed out that "In order to not panic, I would focus on my breathing, or the clock on the wall, or the air conditioning." She noted that "the breathing was relaxing, but I've also just felt like I wanted to move." I asked her what her mind was doing at that time; she said: "my mind was focused on my breathing. And there were thoughts but nothing super; no thoughts that really drew me away." She emphasized that "Mostly I was very present to my body," and her mind was focusing on her "physical sensations." In fact, I was surprised about how these sounds helped her to focus on her breathing; she stated that "those sounds helped me sort of pull out of my body a little bit." On the other

hand, these sounds distracted me when I had practiced the guided meditation with Wallace before conducting the somatic mindfulness workshop. From my point of view, I had some considerations about how these sounds could affect the participants' engagement in the meditation session, while Participant B told me she had a different perspective than what I expected.

Participant B provided some reasons why she couldn't focus on the meditation process; she stated that "I was very aware of the tie around my waist from my dress. I felt I couldn't breathe deep enough. At the beginning though it felt very good to close my eyes until I felt I needed to move." It was good for her to understand her body and senses in order to overcome any obstacles that prevented her from engage in the present moment. She clarified another important reason for why she couldn't concentrate at that time, stating that "I felt a heaviness, a constriction in my chest." She said, "I did not want to be still, mainly because I had been told to be still." Participant B indicated she wanted to be free from any internal and external pressure, so she didn't like the guided meditation because it forced her to be still.

During the observation, I noticed how she had some difficulties with engaging quickly in the meditation process; for instance, she was moving her hands, legs, and head constantly. Later, I asked her about how this feeling and thoughts affected her body posture during the meditation session. She stated the cause behind this action was "I don't know. I felt like I had to move, or I was going crazy." She continued her thoughts "I think sometimes, depending on the day, it's easier to sit still and sometimes it feels forced. And today it felt forced. So, I felt like I just needed to move." By changing her movement and adjusting her body postures in a certain way, she could project herself in the meditative mood.

Furthermore, she did not engage effectively with the guided meditation because it asked

her to be still while the walking meditation allowed her to open her eyes and walk anywhere as she wanted. This kind of meditation was different from the guided meditation, which asked her to close her eyes and sit still on the chair. For this reason, I didn't observe my participants when they were practicing the walking meditation in order to give them a free space to interact with their environment without any interruption or distraction. At the end of the meditation session, she stated that she "felt ready to move around again. Like ready to come out." Now, she was ready to practice the walking meditation that might help her to interact with her environment.

In addition, Participant B told me that "I felt very tired throughout both practices. I wanted to lie down instead of sitting, but I wanted to move as well." However, she referred to the importance of the walking meditation by pointing out that "The walking meditation was more relaxing because I could move and, in this way, distract myself from my body to a degree." Participant B reflected how her movement was affected by practicing the walking meditation when she became more aware of how her foot contacted the floor. She stated that when I asked her about more details of her perceptual experience with the walking meditation: "Being able to focus on my feet moving and not just my bodily sensations but being able to listen and look and use all my senses. It was a little more relaxing, this one." I was satisfied to hear how practicing the walking mediation after the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing could help her to be more relaxed and appreciate her body, senses, and the world.

In fact, I have had some concerns about how these collections of different kinds of meditation, the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing and the walking meditation, could help the participants to develop their perceptual and visual experience. Once, Wallace asked me about the effects of letting my participants engage in both meditation practices, the guided and walking meditations because these two are different from each other. As I said

before, the guided meditation asked the participants to close their eyes and to be still, but the walking meditation let them open their eyes and walk freely. Even though they are different ways of how to let the participants connect to their worlds, they still help them to make a body and mind connection to be in the present moment.

I asked Participant B about what kind of experience, thoughts, and feelings she had after she practiced meditation; she pointed out how practicing the walking meditation affected her body, she stated that "After the walking meditation, my feet and how I was stepping. And how quickly I moved all the time. So, I was noticing I was sort of slowing down a little bit." She told me these practices helped her to move, but slower. Participant B was walking around the gallery when she was keeping the same meditative body pauses, such as bending her back (monhani, منحني), swinging/rocking/swaying (motaarjeh, متأرجح), and stretching her body (motamadid, تمدد). Participant B declared some thoughts about her perceptual experience when she was walking in the gallery; she asserted, "I guess you could say interpretations, but more like looking at something, and it reminded me of something else. Or I was making different connections with the art than I was yesterday." By the way, I noticed she spent more time looking mindfully at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*), and she was moving her head on the right and left sides and stretching her body, arms, and shoulders.

Participant B described how her visual and perceptual experience changed before and after meditation. She noticed her favorite piece was dirty, and she "liked that it wasn't perfectly clean." I was eager to hear more about her experience to understand why she "was glad that the plexiglass was dirty," and why "it was very interesting." She described what she discovered from this art piece: "I imagined I like this piece, full of uneven, smudged pieces. But put together I am able to portray (like the shadow grid) an organized clean look." She saw herself in this artwork

and how it reflected who she is/was in the world. Participant B pointed out that "I was seeing like inside me like my thoughts, my actions, what I do; like all of those, who I am." She clarified what her mind was doing when she was looking at this artwork:

> And then my mind started to make a connection of that for me I'm like this plexiglass. All these uneven sorts of dirty pieces. But once they're arranged, I can appear to be like the grid. That's very structured and organized and clean. So, I was just thinking about what's inside versus how we appear on the outside.

In addition, I asked her about if she noticed these details yesterday; she said "I mean I did notice that, but I didn't connect it to like myself. I didn't make like a personal connection." It was interesting to go deeper and get more details about this experience by understanding who she is in the world.

I was curious about the reason of why she saw more details with interpretations today than yesterday. I asked her if the reason was because it was the second day of visiting the gallery or if it was because of the meditation session that she could go deeper and think mindfully. Participant B responded "I don't know. I mean I saw the piece already yesterday, so perhaps my brain was just trying to do something new with it." Moreover, she found another reason that might help her today to discover a new visual experience; she indicated that "I think also my state of mind yesterday was different from my state of mind today with or without meditation." In fact, Participant B provided interesting details that I could only get by sharing with her what she had already revealed of her visual and perceptual experience when she was encountering the visual art in the gallery.

Later, she noticed her breathing a couple of times and she whispered, "I'm supposed to notice my breathing now," and she continued "Like I would be standing in front of something and think: Oh, I should notice my breath now." So, I asked her about if she noticed her breathing yesterday, but she said she was yawning more. At that time, I remembered when she told me

how she adjusted her body postures yesterday to become relaxed. She stated that “I didn’t notice that much today,” however, she pointed out that “I also didn’t notice as much you are taking pictures, or I didn’t care. I was like whatever, it’s fine.” It was clear that she wanted to engage in her world without external interruption which could corrupt her sensorial experience.

In addition, I noticed how she engaged in the gallery freely without caring if I was taking a picture of her, but also, I noticed she didn’t feel comfortable to appear in the camera. For instance, when we were visiting the gallery, I noticed Participant B moved her hand quickly when she recognized that there was someone observing her, and the cameras recorded her physical attitude. At that moment, I was worried about if the camera might affect her engagement in the gallery when she encountered these artworks. She pointed out that after putting her hand above the artwork and recognized there were cameras, she was wondering if she should not do that, but she said she didn’t care and wanted to make this shadow anyway.

After a while, I asked her about her feelings when the shadow reflected on her hand; she indicated that “Maybe a little satisfaction. Like I felt good that I did that. But I didn’t do that yesterday.” Then she told me why she removed her hand quickly “We’re not supposed to touch art in galleries but my creating shadow, I was touching the art so there was something a little rebellious about it. I just felt like doing that.” In fact, I didn’t want to interject into her world, so I decided to avoid using the camera the next day to provide a free place for them to discover this experience and engage naturally in the gallery.

Participant B described her bodily experience that she wanted to keep moving. She gave me more details about this experience when she was wandering in the gallery. She told me, “I want to shift my weight, like rock, either forward or backward. Mostly side to side. And I wanted to do that today. Like the whole time. I think I just wanted to move. Keep moving.” It was

interesting to hear more about her embodied experience, so I asked her about her feelings when she was rocking, and how this could be related to the artworks. She declared this point: “I’m unable to consciously connect it to what I see or what I’m thinking,” then she shed light on some views that “I mean normally I’m always moving. Like it’s hard for me to be still. But this swaying motion comes naturally.” When I observed her in the gallery, I noticed her she was making some physical practices, such as stretching her body and wandering around the gallery without focusing her attention on any specific artwork.

I asked her which piece of art induced her to make these movements; she replied “I didn’t notice I wasn’t aware of it being in response to the work of art. I just felt like I wanted to move throughout the whole show. Maybe there was a subconscious connection.” Later, she summarized her visual and physical experience before and after meditation “I mentioned just the movement, rocking, and sort of making these interpretations that I didn’t make yesterday.” After a moment, she noticed another difference in her experience between today and yesterday, which was the time; she recognized that “It felt like the time went a lot faster today. Like yesterday it felt very long.” In the end, I was curious to get deeper on her experience by asking myself some questions: Why did she like to keep moving today more than yesterday, why did she have more interpretations and details than yesterday, why did she not notice the time today, and would there be any change in her visual and sensorial experience tomorrow.

6.4 After Meditation (Post-Meditation Practices): The Third Day

I started the interview by asking Participant A about her experience in the meditation session, and she stated how “it was more difficult to focus today,” and how her mind was struggling at that time. Moreover, she wrote that “I was more distracted this time, and it took more effort to be focused in the present. But ultimately, I was able to relax better.” By spending

some attempts to be concentrated in the current moment, she felt her skin when she was practicing the guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing. Participant A pointed out that "I was at least paying attention to my skin," and she noted how this kind of practicing helped her to feel more self-aware in her body. I noticed Participant A was a bit nervous because she came late today, or there might be another reason for that. She reacted the same as yesterday; she was in a state of quietness during this session. She kept the same body posture where she put her palms (forehand) down on her legs and raised her head a little higher with a slight smile when she closed her eyes.

Furthermore, I wanted to be sure about how the walking meditation affected her visual and perceptual experience, especially when she listened to a clear mindfulness audio recording this time. She was satisfied with the audio, stating, "Oh yeah, it was great," and she continued "I think I can use it when I like to walk, and I again heard it differently, and the words were slightly different." She kept talking about her experience with the walking meditation; she stated that "I look around; I started noticing things on the wall that bumps on the wall, scratches. I felt more of a connection with the room, and I like the color very much." I remembered that moment when she told me about her visual experience (the wall); however, I couldn't notice or see these details even when she told me about them.

Moreover, the walking meditation not only helped Participant A connect with the world around her, but also connect with her body. She stated that "the walking guidance made me notice my feet and how they connect to the ground. How my eyes and glance connect with the environment." It was interesting to learn more about her visual and perceptual experience, and how the different kinds of meditation practices in this project could work well with the participants. Therefore, I asked her if the walking meditation after the guided meditation with

mindfulness of breathing helped her to engage in the meditative mood effectively. She said she enjoyed the walking meditation and added that "I like that it's a recording, so if I say something, I can go back. I'm going to listen to this because I mean...I find it's very good for me. I'm going to use it." Listening to the mindfulness audio recording when she was practicing the walking meditation helped her to appreciate her body and the world around her.

I turned her attention again to her body experience, thoughts, and feelings by asking her what she felt after practicing meditation; she told me about her feelings before practicing meditation - that she "was in a lot of hurry working on several issues at the same time." Participant A described how practicing meditation helped her to be relaxed: "I was calmer than when I came. So, I was not worried because before I came, I was late and in a hurry. So, after the meditation, I felt better and not worried." In addition, I asked her if she was worried because she was late, or if there was another reason for that; she said: "no, it's just I was doing a lot of things before I came." At that time, I didn't want to her to feel like I was judging her because she was late. I just wanted to know more about her experience, and how practicing meditation helped her to reduce her stress and anxieties. Thus, it was great to know how practicing the guided and walking mediations with mindfulness of breathing helped her physically, mentally, and spiritually.

In addition, I asked Participant A about how she experienced the time when she was in the gallery, and if this experience was different from yesterday. She said she didn't pay attention. I tried to pull some answers from her by asking her if spending 20 minutes in the gallery was enough; she stated that:

> I felt like I knew where I wanted to go. So, I didn't feel like I am confined to this place. I have to be there for 20 mins. So, the works feel familiar and maybe I didn't need more time, but I also know if I want to come which is not my case but the fact that I have been

> coming for 3 times already gives me subconsciously makes sure I can come again, look if I want.

I noticed that she spent less time today than yesterday, which led me to ask her about her experience with the time and whether it was enough for her. However, by coming three times to the gallery and spending 20 minutes looking mindfully at the same artworks might help her to engage more in the meditative process in order to discover more details and interpret her visual and perceptual experience.

At that time, I wondered about the reason for making my participants engage in the meditative mood: was it the time, or practicing the guided and walking meditation, or were there other reasons? Therefore, I asked Participant A if meditation affected her breathing, body posture, and movement when she was in the gallery. She stated that "I don't know if it affected it, but I don't know if it was because of meditation, and I don't remember anything about body posture because I was moving." She stated she just moved naturally by attuning her body in a way to connect more with the artworks; she confirmed that "I moved to different places just because I wanted to see the work from different angles." By observing Participant A when she was encountering the artworks, I noticed some meditative body postures that she kept doing in the gallery, such as crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), bending her back forward or backward (monhani, منحني), leaning her body or part of her body on the wall (maeal, مائل), stretching her body (motamadid, متمدد), and putting her hands on her hip.

Participant A described how looking slowly and walking mindfully helped to enrich her visual and perceptual experience; she noticed "there were different movements, and different patterns," such as faces and lips, on the left side of Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*). Participant A indicated some details of how her visual experience changed after practicing meditation:

> After meditation, I noticed different things this time. For example, the "mountain" has

> another side close to the wall with shapes that are not seen from the opposite side. I also noticed "fingerprint" pattern on the surface of the wave sculpture and bumps as it is skin. The looping video feeling like it is sensation traveling over the surface of the skin. The "mountain" feels like teeth. The brown stoneware "pool" has lips that are touching the wall. And the ceramic cement cone/oval at the beginning of the gallery feel like the inside of the stomach-grid, shapes, and texture.

I was amazed to hear about her visual and embodied experience. Later, I went back to the exhibition to see the patterns that Participant A told me about, and I took some close pictures of this artwork to investigate what kind of patterns I could find.

Moreover, I kept asking her about her visual and perceptual experience before and after practicing meditation. I posed a question about what the first experience of art was after she finished the meditation. She told me she doesn't remember. Then Participant A told me that "I like to look at moving objects, but I thought this was important. Also, I wanted to look at it. And this also looks like waves." I noticed that she was looking mindfully to the movement of the light on Artwork 6 (*Materiality of Light #4*) when she put her hands on her hip. Also, she provided some interpretations of what she saw in the gallery by paying attention to some things around her. She stated that "they look like a microbial level or the level of the inside of the body." This structure was "not only human but all living things." She described what she meant, "for example, the ceramic columns look like...they could be the inside of the body, but it could also be a bacteria colony." By walking and looking mindfully, Participant A could discover more details in the artworks or even in the gallery setting that she noticed before, but she "did pay attention to the surfaces of the things."

Later, I was curious to ask her about if she found or made any connection between her body and the artworks because I saw her put her right hand above Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) to see the reflection of the light on her hand. Participant A responded, "I wanted to see how the light affects the sculpture. So, I wanted to see where the light goes." Then she told me how she

noticed her fingers made the same effect that they were “like looping shadow, but in the opposite direction.” I asked her about the sense of the self when she was in the gallery, she pointed out that “It was calm, and I was ready to go back to the art that I already know.” In sum, I noticed how Participant A was attracted by the movement, repetition, and silence in these artworks that helped her to be relaxed and calm and to engage in the meditative mood.

In my interview with Participant B, I asked her first about her feelings when she was meditating. She stated, “During meditation, I felt mostly relaxed” and “wanted to be quiet.” At that time, I felt more relaxed too because there were no distractions during the meditation session, especially when Participant B told me she wasn’t distracted by these voices that we heard from time to time, but instead some of them (the clock beats) helped her to focus more on her breathing. However, she pointed out an important feeling: that even though Wallace’s voice was soothing, she felt she was “the most relaxed when he stopped talking, and it was just quiet.” She added she felt relaxed today, and she wanted to be still; she attempted to concentrate on her breathing instead of his voice. Participant B noticed that “There were a few times my mind drifted, but I felt like my breathing was slow and steady paced. There wasn’t anything strange or different with my breath.” By observing her, I noticed that even though she didn’t move as much as yesterday, she moved her eyeballs from time to time possibly inferring quick thoughts.

In addition, she gave me more reasons of why she could not focus during the meditation session today; she highlighted that “I found sometimes when there are words being used in a guided meditation, they distract me. So, you know ‘visualization.’ Some of them work well and help relax me and some of them just distract me.” Then she provided a clear description of what she meant about *visualization* that helped me to understand her visual experience. She clarified that “Like thinking about light pouring like liquid. It’s just the ‘visualization’ of that it’s almost

like funny. Like it doesn't make me feel relaxed. I just think this is just kind of crazy." These words prevented her from engaging in the meditative process by visualizing these words and judging what she was listening to. Participant B had enough experience with meditation, as a leader of meditation, so that she knew how to pull herself out from this hindrance by focusing on her breathing and avoiding listening as much to the speaking.

During the meditation session, I noticed Participant B was holding both hands together, which let me think she was in a state of tension. Later, she became relaxed and engaged in the meditation process. I told her that I noticed your body posture was relaxed at that time, but your hands were not. She stated that "Oh, where my hands were held. I feel like when my hands were not, my fingers would start to move, and then it just feels weird." Also, she added that "I just don't like that sensation, so I try to keep my hands just gently clasped." She stated she became relaxed gradually; she told me "But I didn't feel today as much I wanted to move until like the very end." She wanted to shift her attention by holding her hands to focus on her breathing and her body. She tried to listen to Wallace when some of his words could help her concentrate. For example, she explained this point:

> Although once he started to draw our attention to our legs, our feet, then I wanted to move my feet of course. Other than that, I felt like I had to move a little bit because my back is always sore. So, I would sort of shift and get comfortable again. But I didn't feel I wanted to move as much as yesterday.

In fact, I saw how she was aware of her body and senses; I noticed how she understood how to avoid thinking about any distractions by making mind and body connections that helped her to be in the present moment.

I was eager to hear more about her visual and perceptual experience with the walking meditation, so she described her experience: "the walking meditation was relaxing." In addition, she distinguished between her experience today and yesterday; she stated that "I found myself

yesterday I looked at the photographs a lot as I was walking, and today I'm just more sort of looked around the room." Participant B continued her speech by saying that "Not necessarily looking at some photographs. But I didn't feel like I needed to stare at them for a long time. I was just passing." I found how she wanted to be relaxed and didn't want to focus on any artworks in order to give her mind a space of calmness; she didn't want to distract her mind and body so that she might engage in the meditative mood.

As I mentioned before, I needed to understand more of how these collections of different kind of meditation practices could help my participants to be in a present moment. Thus, I asked her if the walking meditation after the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing helped her focus more on her body and senses, so she responded, "I don't know. I mean I feel like I typically am very aware of how my body is feeling." Then she pointed out an important thought that "I think because I practice this so often since I was young, I've always been very aware of my body because of the different things I've done. So, I don't really notice any difference." I understood why she couldn't notice any changes in her perceptual experience, which was because of her daily habit (routine) of practicing meditation, but not because of being less aware of her body and senses.

After the walking meditation, she visited the gallery, so I posed some questions to extract some details of her bodily experience, thoughts, and feelings that she could have after practicing meditation. Participant B stated that "I didn't need to move a lot. And I think also because I have already seen the gallery, and you know this is our third time seeing it." She told me how she listened to her body "to be in the moment" by avoiding thinking about or even looking at any art anymore. Instead she looked at the floor or the wall as a way for the self to take some breaks. Later, she stated that "I briefly looked at all of the pieces in the gallery then spent most of my

time with three pieces;" I noticed how she just wanted to walk mindfully and look slowly at some artworks that drew her attention somehow.

In addition, Participant B illustrated she didn't know "why those changes happened." Then she tried to give some reasons of why there were some changes in her experience, and she pointed out that "I don't know if it's because I was seeing the same work, or my process changed, or because of the breathing, I'm not sure." At that time, she told me she would like to make some physical practices while she was encountering these artworks. Participant B understood how attuned her body when she was looking at artworks, and she knew how to bracket her thoughts and feelings. For example, besides wanting to clear her mind and body from any thoughts and feelings by doing some strategies, she wanted to prepare herself to engage deeply with some particular artworks.

She preferred to look at some artworks that caught her attention more than others. She highlighted that "the two pieces with the acrylic the sort of glass, plexiglass, whatever it is;" Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*), which was the one that attracted her yesterday. Also, she indicated another artwork that called her attention today "The piece that drew me the most today was the stoneware and light piece called *Declivity #1*." She described what she noticed in that artwork that attracted her attention: "today the moving light on this piece reminded me of an ultrasound of an empty sound. It felt intimate but also reminded me of stone of a mountain. I looked at this piece for a long time." For more details, she posed some thoughts about this artwork: "And then it was interesting because there's almost like the glaze has dripped down. It's interesting. I don't know what the artist... if he had an intention behind it." Looking and walking mindfully through three consecutive days allowed Participant B to discover some signs that she noticed in the previous days, but she gave some interpretations of what she saw.

Furthermore, when I was observing Participant B, I noticed some meditative body pauses that she did when she was encountering the artworks. Some of these physical practices were crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, قائم/مستقيم), bending her back forward or backward and bending her legs back (monhani, منحني), stretching her body – hands and arms (motamadid, متمدد), squatting (moqarfes, مقرفص), and crossing her legs. Through our interview, she indicated that she stretched her body when she was looking at the artworks. I asked her if she did that just today or every time when she was in the gallery; she told me "I'm always doing this." I was curious to know if there were any changes in her movement, postures, or breathing that's different today from yesterday. She replied, "well yesterday, I felt like I wanted to keep moving, like rocking or moving or walking." However, today, she wanted to be still and relaxed in all her body; she stated that "I just wanted to be still. Like I just wanted to sit down, or I think I squatted on the ground for little awhile or stand. Like I felt like I didn't want to move." It was interesting to get a deeper understanding of her perceptual and embodied experience when she interacted with the artworks in the gallery.

She didn't make any interpretations today, but she instead appreciated the technicality of the artwork. She pointed out some thoughts:

> I was trying to figure out just what the artist was processing in order to get this piece of acrylic to make this shadow. So, like how long did it take him, what process did he have to go through. And then to create the table that had, you know. It's just so perfectly designed. So, I was just not really interpreting today but just appreciating the technicality of it. Really neat.

In short, I had previously believed that I did not want the participants to look at the technicality, the materiality, and the complexity of the artworks because I did not want them to spend time with some details that might detach them from engaging in the meditative mood. However, my role as a phenomenological researcher revealed some facts that it was impossible to control them

in this way because they should interact with their environments naturally. Also, if I want them to engage in the meditative mood, they should first appreciate this artwork by thinking deeply and posing some questions in order to merge their mind and body together to be in the present moment.

CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I take the data from the study and analyze it using basic phenomenological ideas found in Merleau-Ponty and other authors. According to Merleau-Ponty (1968, 1993, 2004, 2012), perception is a part of our lived experience, and lived experience is what infuses perception with meaning. In relation to my study, both participants reflected on how their visual and perceptual experience changed before and after practicing the guided and walking meditations with mindfulness of breathing. Each participant experienced different changes, but the important point is that the experience changed in meaningful and significant ways for understanding the relationship between individuals, bodies, practices, environments, and works of art.

Particularly, I want to argue how the experience of my participants reveals something fundamental about their perception, art, and meditation. Thus, I describe three types of changes experienced by my participants with explicit reference to the data presented in the previous chapter by focusing on their perceptual experience before and after conducting the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing. I theorize a process of these three types of changes, which are shifts in tempos and rhythms of the body, shifts in focus/intentionality, and shifts in awareness of connectedness between self and world. These three shifts are significant because they show the different impact of meditation on how participants grasped their experiences. Using Merleau-Ponty's notion of "grip," I illustrate how changes in tempo/rhythm, intentionality, and connectedness reveal the ways in which participants achieved different kinds of grip, including maximal/optimal grip, Gestalt shifts in grip, and/or imaginative variations with the grip before and after practicing meditation.

In conclusion, I illustrate these perceptual shifts through visual representations of particularly dynamic moments that I witnessed, as an artistic-phenomenological researcher. These visual representations not only reveal the experience of the participants but also reflect my own experience as a researcher who was within the experiment (rather than outside it). These photographic paintings made visible the invisible flesh existing between participants, the environment, and my perception of the situation. Importantly, my visual phenomenological research takes in account the complexity of the whole phenomenon to discover the fundamental meaning of the visible and invisible dimensions of the aesthetic experience, not just reflecting of what happened as an isolated occurrence.

In addition, the visual representations are a combination of photographs taken during the sessions and overpainting, a process I completed later in my studio. In particular, the medium of photograph and paint provided a further "discovery." The more or less accidental blurriness and transparency of some of the photographs caused by using the photo merger website became a way to make the connection between the subject (the participant), the object (the artwork), researcher (myself), and the environment (the gallery) in the moment of chiasmic interweaving explicit. In other words, the medium of photography threw into relief that in moments of optimal grip between subject and object there is no dualism between the self and the world, or between the visible and invisible worlds. Furthermore, the overlapping of paint on top of the photograph also revealed a kind of layering effect of experience as such, or chiasmic holism of elements between body, environment, and art. In this sense, the images I have made to supplement my written analysis are not mere "illustrations" but actively reveal or at least heighten key elements of the phenomenon which description cannot adequately capture in words. Verbal and visual descriptions should thus be seen as in dialogue with one another, filling in certain gaps to create

a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

7.1 Shift in Tempos and Rhythms of the Body

As my data reveals, by walking mindfully and looking slowly, participants became aware of how to adjust their body postures, breathing, movements, feelings, and thoughts in order to create some balance in the rhythms, tempos, and pacing of their physical, emotional, and mental reactions. In this section, I identify the meaning of rhythms and tempos then describe these types of changes in the rhythms and tempos of movement, body postures, and breathing of the participants before and after practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing when they were in the *Structured Light* exhibition in Gough Gallery. Then I conclude by analyzing the phenomenological implications of these changes in rhythm and tempo.

My question is: Why did the participants continue to adjust their bodies in various ways? What "work" does adjust the body in front of a work of art do? Although they adjusted their bodies differently, the key to my analysis is the simple observation that continual adjustments were being made. First, I describe in detail these various bodily adjustments before and after meditation exercises. Next, I provide an interpretation of how using a painting in my study is a helpful method to understand the phenomenon. In the following sections of this chapter, I then argue that this indicates an attempt by the participants to gain various forms of "grip" on the works of art through the modification of intentionality and connectedness.

7.1.1 Descriptions of Participants' Movements, Body Postures, and Breathing Before and After Practicing Meditation

Before listing the different kinds of changes of the tempo and rhythm of the participants before and after practicing meditation, I want to describe the meaning of a tempo and rhythm. Tempo and rhythm are kinds of changes in the slowness or fastness of the physical, mental, and

emotional reactions, such as movement, body postures, and breathing. Next, I describe the three types of changes before and after practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing and how these changes shifted in different ways for each participant.

7.1.1.1 First Type of Change: Movement

Before practicing meditation, both participants had different experiences in their movements; for instance, Participant A didn't pay attention to whether there were any changes because her tiredness affected her engagement with the visual, physical, and perceptual experience. She focused on the artworks more than her body, movement, and breathing because she found calmness everywhere. The artworks affected her movement by asking her to sit and be still or to move and "notice something different." Sometimes the artworks asked her to come close to see some details in the artworks that the artist made (see Table D.1). However, Participant B has always been aware of her body, movement, and breathing; for example, she moved normally, similar to when she was in any other gallery. Also, she naturally (mindfully) made some balance in her movement and stillness even before practicing different kinds of meditation by asking herself "why I was standing, or why I was moving" (see Table D.1).

After practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing, the participants made some changes in their movement; for instance, Participant A didn't pay attention to her movement because she was moving naturally to see the artworks from different angles. She felt relaxed and still when her mind was drifting during the guided meditation, but later she focused on the present moment and felt more self-aware in her body (the skin) (see Table D.1 and Table D.3). In addition, Participant B wanted to move during the meditation session; she was moving slower and sometimes quickly in the gallery to make a balance in her movement. However, on the next day, she "didn't want to move" when she was in the exhibition,

and she “just wanted to sit down or squat on the ground for a little while or stand.” She consciously moved her body by making different physical practices as a way to find the maximal grip of her visual and embodied experience (see Table D.1). The tempo and pace of the participants’ movement changed before and after practicing meditation by looking attentively at the artworks and walking carefully around the gallery.

7.1.1.2 Second Type of Change: Body Postures

Even before practicing meditation, the artworks called the participants to modify their body postures in a certain way that helped them to make some connection with these works of art. Some of Participant A’s body postures that showed a sign of tiredness were putting both hands on the back of her hip and stretching her back. Also, Participant A had different meditative body patterns, such as (metkatef, متكتف), (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), (maeal, مائل), and (monhani, منحني) (see Table D.1). On the other hand, Participant B adjusted her body postures when she was encountering other artworks, such as (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), (metkatef,متكتف), (monhani, منحني), and (moqarfes, مقرفص) (see Table D.1). Both participants have already engaged in the meditative mood because of the effectiveness of the artworks and the mood of the exhibition, but Participant A might engage more if she paid more attention to her body and senses when she encountered the artworks in order to get the essence of the visual and perceptual experience.

After practicing meditation, Participant A kept using the same body postures that she practiced before meditation when she was looking at the artworks. These were her different body postures when she was encountering the artworks: (metkatef, متكتف), (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), (monhani, منحني), (maeal, مائل), putting her hands on the back of her hip, and stretching her back slightly backward (see Table D.1). Moreover, Participant A engaged more with the

artworks by putting her hand above Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) to see how the light reflected on her hand to also understand how it affected the sculpture. She noticed her fingers made the same effect of looping shadows in different directions.

Further, Participant B made more body postures than before practicing meditation, but she didn't recognize some of them, such as making her back very straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم). These were her meditative body postures when she was encountering the artworks: (metkatef, متكتف), (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), (monhani, منحني), (motamadid, متمدد), (moqarfes, مقرفص), and (motaarjeh, متأرجح) (see Table D.1). In addition to making her back very straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم) when she was looking at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*), Participant B was moving her head on the right and left sides and stretching her body, arms, and shoulders as a way to get deeper with this artwork. Also, she engaged her body more with the artworks to which she felt drawn, such as Artwork 7 (*Landscape #1*) when she put her hand above the artwork to see the reflection of the light on her hand when she didn't do that before meditation. By practicing meditation, participants became aware of their body postures and the relationship between their bodies and the environment around them, especially the artworks.

7.1.1.3 Third Type of Change: Breathing

Before practicing meditation, Participant A didn't pay attention to her breathing because of her tiredness, and Participant B didn't find that the artworks affected her breathing, but she was yawning more. In fact, Participant B was more aware of her body and understood when she needed to breathe (exhale) so that helped her to relax her shoulder (see Table D.1). In addition, Participant A noticed a change in her breathing after meditation that was "like a regular tide," while she did not pay attention to her breathing before meditation. She became calmer and relaxed everywhere in her body, especially her neck when she was looking at the artworks (see

Table D.1). Furthermore, Participant B was relaxing and slowing down the pace of her breathing during the meditation session. Also, she naturally noticed her breathing that was slow and steady paced when she was encountering artworks (see Table D.1). Practicing different kinds of meditation affected the tempos and the rhythms of the participants' movement, body postures, and breathing when they were moving mindfully around the gallery and looking slowly at the artworks.

In sum, these three types of changes (movement, body postures, and breathing) were interconnected and interrelated with each other. This connection between them is circular. For example, breathing related to changes in movement and that related to changes in body gestures. To simplify the complicated connection between these types of changes, I distinguished and separated them in order to show how different kinds of meditation affected each one of them. In order to emphasize the holism and connectivity between these three kinds of changes, I now turn to my artworks. Through my photographic paintings, I attempt to bring these elements together again to depict the interconnectedness of these types of changes in tempos and rhythms between movement, body postures, and breathing for each participant before and after practicing meditation. In the next section, I clarify the significance of using painting in my study.

7.1.2 Interpretation of Participants' Movements, Body Postures, and Breathing Before and After Practicing Meditation

In this section, I want to show the importance of using paintings in this research by understanding how "works of art at their best are capable of showing us the phenomena under consideration more directly, powerfully, and perspicuously than any philosophical prose could" (Wrathall, 2010, p. 9). In fact, there is something unique that the paintings do but words cannot; for example, my photographic paintings reflected not just the perceptual experience of my

participants but also my perceptual experience of the eye as an active presence within the experiment, shaping and being shaped by the flesh of the room.

As Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) concluded, “painting presents the works of nature to our understanding with more truth and accuracy than do words or letters” (Wrathall, 2010, pp. 14-15). Moreover, painting helped me to show the interconnectedness of the three previous types of changes in tempos and rhythms of movement, body postures, and breathing by gathering them again in one piece as one Gestalt that helped to reveal the phenomenon. In these quotations, theorists advocate a turn to arts-based forms of research as a way to supplement the shortcomings of prose. I have taken this seriously and have turned to photography and painting to see how these can help me more adequately reveal the phenomenon.

Furthermore, I want to exploit the blurriness and fuzziness of the photographs not as an unfortunate consequence of low lighting in the gallery space but also as revealing a truth about the visual and perceptual experience when there is no dualism between the two opposite sides. Using painting helped me to embody the feeling of the meditative moment of reversibility between the subject and the object, or the self and the world, or the visible and invisible worlds. In these paintings, I focused on the importance of the balance in a tempo of the movement and stillness of the participants’ bodies, the role of the artist and the artworks even before practicing meditation, and the effect of practicing different kinds of meditation when the participant encountered the artworks.

In my paintings, I embodied a specific moment of the participants’ experience when they made a kind of balance in a tempo of the movement and stillness of their bodies by moving around the gallery and looking at these artworks. For instance, one of my paintings showed how Participant A made some equilibrium in her bodily pacing by walking slowly and looking at

Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*) (Figure 5). Then, she sat and looked mindfully for a few minutes at this artwork. Further, to capture the visible and invisible dimensions of her visual and perceptual experience, I added the same patterns of the artwork, the circular shapes filled with golden or dark blue, or with none of these colors, onto Participant A's body to reflect the connection between her body and the artwork with an emphasis on the repetitive moments between them. This painting showed the power of this artwork by calling her attention to sit and look attentively even before practicing different kinds of meditation. The painting embodied this moment of connection between the self (Participant A), others (artwork - Participant B), and the environment (the world) by giving the feeling of fuzziness to reflect a sense of fusion between them.

Figure 5: Painting 1. This figure shows how Participant A made some equilibrium in her bodily pacing by walking slowly and looking at Artwork 8.

Like the previous painting, I emphasized this certain moment when Participant B made a kind of balance in the rhythm and tempo of her body movement and stillness before practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing. For example, sometimes she

squatted to see how the artist made Artwork 1 (*Cylinder with Hexagon Grid*) and Artwork 2 (*Double Cone with Hexagon Grid*), or she was straightening her back and looking mindfully at these artworks (Figure 6). Hence, this painting depicted different moments when Participant B changed her body postures and movements to show how she was engaging bodily and perceptually with these artworks. In this painting, I tried to represent the two distinct sides of her visible and invisible experience in how this artwork affected the participant's body by including some patterns of the artwork, such as hexagonal shapes, on her body to make a connection between the two of them. Also, I portrayed how her body was transparent and blurry as a way to embody the connection between the subject and the object in the two opposite worlds when there was no dualism between them.

Figure 6: Painting 2. This figure depicts different moments before practicing meditation when Participant B changed her body postures and movement to show she was engaging bodily and perceptually with these artworks.

In most of my paintings, I tried to depict the importance of the meditative moment when some of these artworks affected the body postures and movement of my participants even before practicing different meditations. In particular, I showed this moment when Artwork 9 (*Oval*

Cylinder with Triangle Grid) attracted Participant A's attention to focus on some details in the artwork, and how this artwork asked her to change her body pose by bending her back forward to see inside this artwork when she held the eyeglasses with her right hand (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Painting 3. This figure shows this moment when Artwork 9 attracted Participant A's attention to focus on some details in the artwork, and how this artwork asked her to change her body pose.

Also, I decorated her body and clothing with different patterns that were like the ones on this artwork in order to embody which level she was engaging with the artwork perceptually, visually, and physically. I emphasized the repetition of time that happened between her body and the artwork to interpret the process of connection between the subject and object in the invisible world of the flesh. To depict the repetition of time, I presented the transparency and blurriness on her body to represent the time period of integration between the subject and the object. Moreover, this painting showed how Participant A was attentive by depicting the meditative moment when her body engaged with the artwork to understand how the artist made this artwork, even though she kept a tired body pose by putting her left hand on her hip when she found what her body needed from the calmness in this artwork.

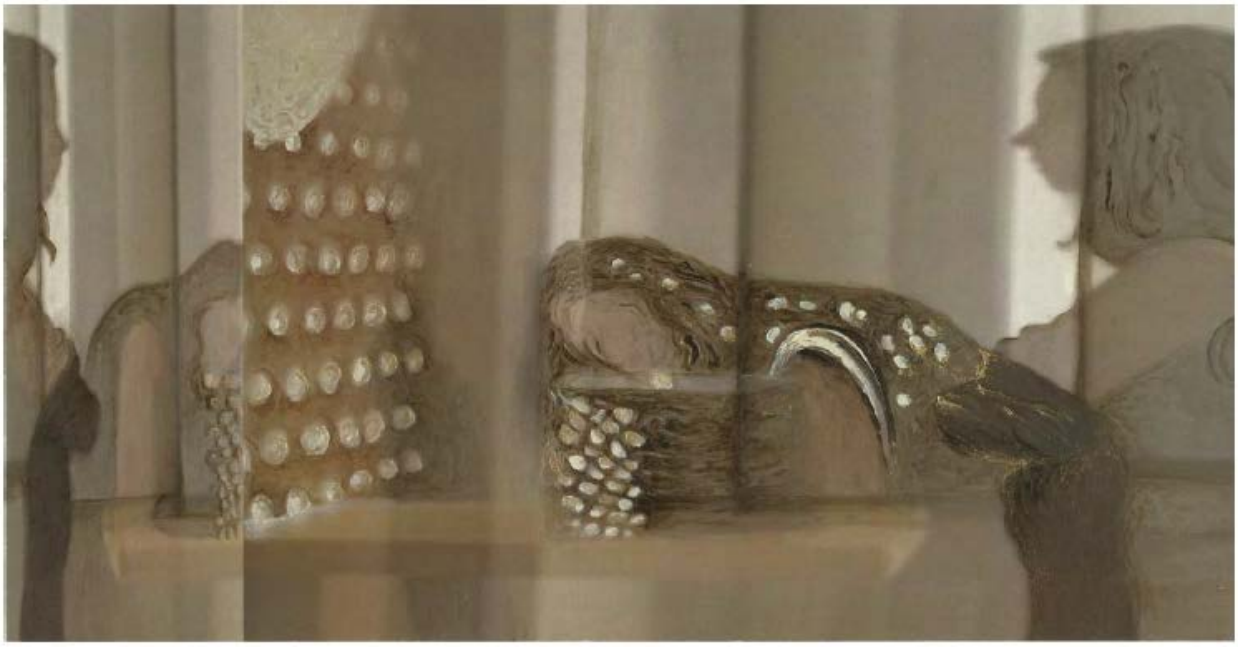

Figure 8: Painting 4. This figure shows how Participant B engaged with Artwork 8, and how it asked her to shift her body postures different times even before practicing meditation.

In another painting, I showed how Participant B engaged with Artwork 8 (*Hollow Cylinder with Diamond Grid*) and how this artwork asked her to shift her body postures different times even before practicing meditation, such as straightening or bending her back to see some details in this artwork (Figure 8). In this painting, I presented the invisible dimension of the meditative moment when she engaged with this artwork in its totality by adding the same patterns of this artwork (golden and silver circles and lines) on her body and clothing to merge as if forming a Gestalt. At the same time, I tried to embody a specific time of reversibility that happened between the subject and the object by reflecting her image on the left side of the painting (as a mirror) to indicate how the self could transfer between two worlds – the visible and invisible worlds. I emphasized how the fuzziness and the transparency in this painting reflected the flesh between the subject (Participant B), the object (artwork), and the exhibition (the world). This painting provided a sense of spatial and temporal replication by adding several vertical lines on the whole painting.

Figure 9: Painting 5. This figure presents how Participant A interacted physically in several periods to represent the shift in rhythm and tempo of her body movements and postures.

In my other paintings, I emphasized how the participants interacted physically in several periods to represent the shift in rhythm and tempo of their body movements and postures. For example, one of my paintings showed different moments when Participant A stayed away from Artwork 3 (*Oscillation Pattern*) and put her hands behind her back during the day before practicing meditation, while after practicing meditation, she engaged completely with the artwork by putting her right hand above the artwork to see how the light reflected on her hand (Figure 9). In this painting, in order to reflect the visible and invisible sides of her perceptual experience, I added some wavy golden lines on her body and clothes, matching the artwork's pattern, to show how the artwork affected the participant's body postures and movement by making a connection with her. In addition, I distinguished between two different periods by depicting more patterns on her body when she was engaging with the artworks after practicing meditation; however, I showed a blurriness and transparency in her body to reflect the specific time before practicing meditation.

Figure 10: Painting 6. This figure emphasizes the repetition of standing several times in front of this artwork and looking attentively even before practicing meditation.

In another painting, I combined different moments that happened before and after practicing different kinds of meditation when Participant B was looking carefully at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) and attuned her body by shifting the rhythm and tempo of the movement and stillness of the body to make a connection with the artwork (Figure 10). Through this painting, I want to emphasize the repetition of standing several times in front of this artwork and looking attentively even before practicing meditation. I emphasized how this artwork asked her to change her movement and body postures several times to access the optimal/maximal grip of her experience even before or after meditation by a loosening up of the self between two opposite worlds: visible and invisible. Moreover, I imagined how she engaged perfectly with this artwork before and after practicing meditation by ornamenting some vertical and glowing lines on parts of her body to resemble the pattern of this artwork. I depicted the feel of fuzziness and blurriness in the painting to reflect visible the invisible flesh moment that happened among the subject, the object, and the world when there was no dualism between them.

In sum, these paintings attempt to capture not just the distinct phenomenological “feel” of shifts in movement and tempo in body postures, breathing, and movements but also the visible

and invisible dimensions of the participants' perceptual experiences. The meditative practices helped the participants' intentionality to shift by focusing on unseen details on the artworks or even in the environment as a whole or also imagining some patterns in the artworks, which helped them to transfer the self to get the grip of the visual, perceptual, and embodied experience. Next, I move from verbal and visual descriptions of changes in posture, breathing, and movement to a phenomenological interpretation of the meaning and significance of these shifts. In particular, I argue that these shifts indicate a kind of experimentation with what Merleau-Ponty refers to as "grip" or the attempt by subjects to find a perceptual equilibrium between themselves and their world.

7.2 Shift in Focus/Intentionality through Three Changes in Grip: Maximal Grip, Gestalt Shift in the Grip, and Imaginative Variations within the Grip

Merleau-Ponty (1968, 1993, 2004, 2012) described the concept of intentionality as an invisible thread between the subject and the object in the world pulling us unconsciously to take up certain positions of viewing. By looking slowly at the artworks and walking mindfully around the exhibition, intentionality shifted before and after practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing to grip the fundamental meaning of their perceptual and visual experience. However, both participants experienced different kinds of perceptual shifts in grip: maximizing grip, Gestalt shift in the grip, and imaginative variations within the grip. In this section, I return to my descriptions offered above in light of Merleau-Ponty's grip theory in order to illustrate how different participants experimented with different ways to "grip" the paintings in relation to the gallery space.

7.2.1 Maximal Grip: A Phenomenological Interpretation of Bodily Adjustments

To understand why participants were continually modifying the rhythms, tempos, and

pacing of their bodies in relation to the art, we can now turn to Merleau-Ponty (2012) and his notion of maximizing grip. In the above example, both participants adjusted their bodies in different ways in order to find the maximal grip as a way to reveal the fundamental meaning of their experience. They were engaged on a bodily level with the work through the way they shifted weight, moved around in circles, rocked back and forth, etc. Importantly, Merleau-Ponty (2012) used the example of viewers moving around in an art gallery to clarify the meaning of maximum of visibility/grip, which relates to our optimal distance when we look slowly at a painting and move mindfully in the gallery to create a balance between the visible and invisible worlds.

Merleau-Ponty (2012) described the concept of maximal grip: “Hence, we tend toward the maximum of visibility and we seek, just as when using a microscope, a better focus point, which is obtained through a certain equilibrium between the interior and the exterior horizons” (p. 316). To understand more about at what level the participants interacted with some specific artworks through their body’s actions, Merleau-Ponty (2012) demonstrated the relation from appearances to the kinesthetic situation: “My body is permanently stationed in front of things in order to perceive them and, inversely, appearances are always enveloped for me within a certain bodily attitude” (p. 316). Maximal Grip is the experience of reversibility, and so reversibility is maximized in this kind when narrowing down their attention to notice more unseen details in some of the artworks.

Descriptions of participant’s bodily adjustments before and after practicing meditation. For instance, Participant B attuned her body several times from a specific distance to reach the maximal grip of her visual and perceptual experience. Her intentionality shifted before practicing different kinds of meditation when her body couldn’t find the maximal grip in some of these

artworks by searching something new that allowed her to convey the self from visible to invisible worlds. Also, Participant B naturally made a balance (a certain equilibrium) between the movement and stillness of her body before and after practicing different kinds of meditation to see new details when she looked mindfully at Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) by keeping the same meditative body posture a long time - her back became very straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم) (see Table D.2). However, Participant B did not recognize the shifting moment when she was looking at this artwork, and her back became straight gradually along with the loosening up of the self to reveal new possibilities of her perceptual experience.

In addition, the depth of this artwork gave Participant B a free place to find her "own ideas and make connections and brainstorms," which helped her discover unseen details and make some interpretations to get the fundamental meaning of this experience. Thus, Participant B was meditative enough and aware of her body by adjusting it unconsciously several times to get in a comfortable position, and she was aware of the world around her and any external distractions, such as the researcher and Participant A (see Table D.4). In fact, after practicing different kinds of meditation, Participant B reached the maximal perceptual grip when she encountered Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*), and her "mind started to make a connection" between the subject (herself) and the object (the artworks) (see Table D.2).

In Painting 7 (Figure 11), I represented how Participant B was looking mindfully a long time from the same distance at this artwork when she adjusted her body unconsciously by making her back sometimes very straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم) or stretching it backward or frontward. Sometimes, she moved around this artwork to get the maximal grip of the visual and perceptual experience by transforming the self to the invisible world. In this artwork, I tried to represent the concept of invisibility by simulating the effect of the twinkling light of this piece

of art on her body and clothes to show the moment of convergence that happened between the subject and the object. This was a great shift in her intentionality to reveal the essence of her visual and perceptual experience with a deep connection between the self and the artwork. This painting presented the fuzziness as a way to show the invisible flesh between the subject and the object in the whole environment. I made several levels of layers, as holistic moments of her perceptual experience, to reflect different times that transpired after the practicing of meditation when Participant B encountered the same artwork to reflect who she is in the world.

Figure 11: Painting 7. This figure presents the fuzziness as way to show the flesh between the subject and the object in the whole environment.

Participant B provided a clear description of her narrowing focus on unseen details of this artwork by bracketing her thoughts and feelings to understand who she is/was in the world. For instance, she stated, “I was seeing like inside me like my thoughts, my actions, what I do; like all of those, who I am.” Merleau-Ponty (1993) described how the mirror reverses the role between the subject and the object when there is no dualism between them. Participant B interlaced with this artwork and reflected the meaning of being in the world by understanding who she is. Participant B connected the self with the artworks by making more interpretations than before

meditation. However, during the next day of practicing meditation, she didn't make any more interpretations; instead, she focused on the technicality, the materiality, and the complexity of the artworks (see Table D.2).

In fact, after practicing meditation, her intentionality shifted when Participant B was making some physical mindfulness strategies that helped her bracket her thoughts and feelings to concentrate on the current moment and connect the mind and the body together so that she could reveal the fundamental meaning of her visual and perceptual experience. For example, during the guided meditation and visiting the gallery sessions, Participant B shifted her intentionality by focusing on her breathing and adjusting her body several times - especially when she was encountering the artworks - in order to see more details and different patterns, such as "ultrasound of an empty space" and "stone from a mountain."

In one of my paintings, I reflected on a meditative moment when Participant B adjusted her body in different ways to see how the artist dripped down a glaze from Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*) that allowed her to imagine an ultrasound of an empty place (Figure 12). Here, I tried to embody the invisible phenomenon of her perceptual experience by visualizing some of the golden motifs on this artwork branched (split) through her body to portray the transfer of the self between two different worlds, as a way to depict the reversibility that occurred when she connected physically and perceptually with this artwork. This painting reflected the role of the art that asked the participant to shift her body postures to connect the self with the object. Also, in this painting, I depicted a specific meditative moment when Participant B encountered the same artwork; for example, I showed how she practiced some physical meditative activities several times (stretching her legs and hands) before and after practicing different kinds of meditation. By repeating the image of her body multiple times, I tried to describe how she

engaged more with this artwork to get the maximal grip of her visual and perceptual experience. To provide an added reflection of how she projected herself into the invisible world, I imagined part of her body (her head) reflected on the U shape of the artwork (the light area), which created a sense of a deep connection between the self and the object.

Figure 12: Painting 8. This figure reflects the role of the art that asked the participant to shift her body postures to connect the self with the object.

In sum, practicing different kinds of physical mindfulness activities, phenomenological forms of bracketing, helped Participant B to get the perceptual maximal grip and connect the self with the world in order to discover the invisible world. However, besides the shift in focus to get the maximal grip, there were two other different perceptual experiences with grip: Gestalt shift in the grip and imaginative variations within the grip. Next, I describe the second perceptual shift in grip: Gestalt shift in grip that was an example of how to broaden the intentionality to focus on the whole environment with the artworks.

7.2.2 Gestalt Shift in the Grip: A Phenomenological Interpretation of Focusing on a Wider Aesthetic Experience

A key influence on Merleau-Ponty is Gestalt psychological theory (2004, 2012). Gestalt

psychology focuses on how humans perceive wholes, not parts, and these wholes have a foreground and a background which combine to form a “scene” or “view.” In my study, one of my participants experienced certain kinds of Gestalt shifts in foreground and background after meditating. In particular, we can interpret the widening of focus as a kind of Gestalt shift where the foreground (the artwork) goes in the background, and the background (the whole environment) comes in the foreground. So, there is a change in focus from the work itself to a broader context.

After practicing different kinds of meditation, Participant A widened her focus when her intentionality shifted to different things around her in the environment beyond specific artworks (see Table D.2). For instance, during the walking meditation, Participant A noticed different things on the wall that allowed her to connect more with the environment as a whole (in the dance studio). Also, she observed new things in the GDAC, such as “the main lobby,” “the paintings in the hallway before going into the Gough gallery,” and “the other rooms.” Participant A “noticed things that are up high, but they are not art” in the Gough gallery, such as “the structures that were on the ceiling,” “the second floor,” “the railing,” and “the balcony” that she did not notice before meditation (see Table D.2).

Furthermore, she noticed how the place and different things, such as the bench, the railing, and the balcony were connected and similar to the artworks in the Gough gallery. The real discovery of this study was that her intentionality shifted toward a new kind of aesthetic experience of the wider environment as a whole. The environmental background suddenly came into the foreground of her experience while she lost the maximal grip of a particular work of art. In other words, the participant did not actually refine her maximal grip so much as experience a Gestalt shift.

This surprising finding suggested how practicing different kinds of meditation could also expand Merleau-Ponty's notion of maximal grip beyond just focusing on a specific object (the artwork) in the environment, but on the environment as well. In this sense, meditation can have different effects on one's perceptual relationship to works of art: narrowing down the attention to notice more unseen details in some of the artworks and broadening the focus to move away from particular artworks to the whole environment. For the next step, I present the third perceptual shift in grip, which concerns imaginative variations of exploring different patterns and thinking about several narratives when looking at the works of art.

7.2.3 Imaginative Variations within the Grip: A Phenomenological Interpretation of Creating Different Narratives and Meanings

Imaginative variations within the grip is a classic phenomenological theme by Husserl that takes a phenomenon then tries to imagine it in as many ways as possible to create variations of narratives or meanings in the experience. For example, Participant A imagined various patterns when she walked around the gallery, and her intentionality shifted to see different patterns, such as geometry shape, the structure, creek, and waterfall (see Table D.2). Furthermore, Participant A also played with imaginative variations in the meaning of the various patterns. After practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing, Participant A recognized some metaphoric interpretations with different movements and patterns, such as human faces (see Table D.2) even if there were many internal distractions (thoughts and feelings) and external distractions (environment as a whole) (see Table D.4 and Table D.5).

In my painting, I tried to reflect on the meditative moment when Participant A stood on the right side of Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*), and she was looking carefully to see some human faces on the side (Figure 13). This painting showed some repetitions when the participant was

encountering the same artwork several times after practicing meditation in order to recognize more invisible details on this side of the artwork.

Figure 13: Painting 9. This figure shows some repetitions when Participant A was encountering the same artwork several times after practicing meditation in order to recognize more details on this side of the artwork.

To capture the invisible aspect of her perceptual experience, I depicted how her body and the artwork merged together when there was no dualism between them by emphasizing the effect of the dripped glaze split (rippling) on her body and fading or becoming immersed through her body into the artwork. The painting presented how this artwork affected the participant visually, bodily, and perceptually by asking her to move her body to see from different angles. Moreover, in the next day of practicing meditation, Participant A noticed different things at that time (see Table D.2). For example, she described her visual and perceptual experience and what she did see; she stated that "the 'mountain' has another side close to the wall with shapes that are not seen from the opposite side." She continued her description, noticing a "'fingerprint' pattern on the surface of the wave sculpture and bumps as it is skin. The looping video feeling like it is sensation traveling over the surface of the skin. The 'mountain' feels like teeth."

Also, she provided more interpretations of what she noticed after practicing meditation, stating “The brown stoneware ‘pool’ has lips that are touching the wall. And the ceramic cement cone/oval at the beginning of the gallery feels like the inside of the stomach-grid, shapes, and texture.” These were interesting details in the artworks that she recognized after practicing different kinds of meditation. Furthermore, Participant A added more interpretations of what she noticed after meditation, describing some of these artworks “like a microbial level or the level of the inside of the body.” She pointed out how the structure could be the inside of the human body, and also all living things (a bacteria colony). By practicing different types of meditation, Participant A discovered more details in the artworks or even in the gallery setting that she noticed before practicing meditation but with more interpretations and details.

On the other hand, Participant B didn’t broaden her focus on the whole environment when she just focused deeply on specific artworks. It was almost like she moved from maximizing a particular grip to engaging in imaginative variations with the art work, moving from meaning to technical art-making processes. For instance, Participant B imagined different patterns and saw more details in the artworks; some of these imaginative variations were “ultrasound of an empty space” and “stone from a mountain” (see Table D.2). In my previous Painting 8, I represented the meditative moment when Participant B was looking very close to see how the artist created Artwork 4 (*Declivity #1*) when she imagined interesting details and different patterns, such as ultrasound of an empty space on this art piece.

In the end, practicing the guided and walking meditations with mindfulness of breathing helped the participants focus their intentionality to discover unseen details in the artworks, to make metaphorical interpretations and different narratives, and to create different connections with specific artworks or the environment as a whole. After discussing how the participants

experienced these different types of perceptual changes in grip: maximizing grip, Gestalt shift in the grip, and imaginative variations within the grip, I now move to the third shift in awareness that happened between the self and the world.

7.3 Shift in Awareness of Connectedness between Self and World

There is something mysterious about the phenomenon of vision. Merleau-Ponty writes: "The enigma [of looking] derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen" (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p. 124). There is a mystery in the relationship between the subject and the object in the world when the role between them switches: for instance, when the viewer looks at the painting and is the seer and the seen at the same time. Merleau-Ponty (1993) clarified the notion of intertwining between the two worlds, visible and invisible worlds, stating, "the visible world and the world of my motor projects are both total parts of the same Being" (p. 124). Also, Carman (2008) defined the meaning of visibility:

> Visibility, in Merleau-Ponty's sense of the world, is neither surface appearance nor sensory stimulation. It is the intuitively felt reality of things disclosed to us as part of a dense, opaque world, the milieu in which things show up, *amid* other things. (pp. 188-189)

Johnson (1993) stated that reversibility should be seen as the mystery, the intertwining, or chiasm, which is the relationship between visible and invisible dimensions of the perceptual experience. This kind of reversibility has been ignored by the traditional philosophers, such as Descartes, who made a dualism between two opposite sides.

According to Johnson (1993), the depth of the visible is the hidden unity, which is the chiasm, between the two worlds that allows the self and otherness to meet. The chiasm is a point of convergence between the subject and object when the self is allowed to transform from the visible to the invisible so that it becomes free from the limitation of its subjectivity. Many philosophers have highlighted the power of reversibility that embodies the relationship between

two opposite sides: “subjective and objective, interior and exterior, self and others, privacy and community” (Brubaker, 2003, p. 27). Johnson (1993) clarified the relationship between the subject and object, explaining that “When my right hand touches my left, the right hand is touched in reply, and in the next instant the relation may be reversed” (p. 48). Johnson (1993) and Low (2000) pointed out the reversibility of subject and object that embodies the lived experience of the painter (or the viewer) encountering the world, so that the fundamental meaning of the aesthetic experience could be formed.

Moreover, Johnson (1993) explained what the flesh means: “The doubling with difference between self and world is the meaning of Flesh” (p. 49). Flesh, another phenomenological term used by Merleau-Ponty, reflects how the subject and the objects emerge flexibly together in the world, such as between viewer and painting. Merleau-Ponty (1993) stated that “Things have an internal equivalent in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence” (p. 126). By looking at the painting, the viewer could recognize the other objects around him in the world; it is a reversibility relationship between the subject and object. Johnson (1993) explained the meaning and relationship between the flesh and reversibility, which is “Flesh and reversibility are notions meant to express both envelopment and distance, the paradox of unity at a distance or sameness with difference, finding a new ontological way between monism and dualism” (pp. 47-48). According to Johnson (1993), Merleau-Ponty introduced the term flesh in an account of what he means by the reversibility that appears between the world and the painter, who gains aesthetic experience by continuing to practice looking at the world.

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty (1993) clarified the relationship between the subject and object with “the instrument of universal magic,” which is the mirror that transforms the self into another object and vice versa. Merleau-Ponty (1993) discussed how the mirror reflects the

concept of reversibility to see and be seen; he stated that “the mirror has sprung up along the open circuit between the seeing and the visible body” (p. 129). The mirror gives us a similar thought of our relationship with others in that by looking at ourselves in the mirror, we become the subject and the object at the same time.

Moreover, Johnson (1993) stated that the mirror is as an “outline of the metaphysical structure of Flesh. In the mirror, the entire room is digested in reverse, what is on my left becomes what is on my right” (p. 48). In contrast, Merleau-Ponty (1993) stated that “The Cartesian does not see himself in the mirror; he sees a puppet” (p. 131). This means that there is no reflection in the mirror due to the dualism between the subject and the object, so Cartesians cannot see themselves in the mirror. My awareness of the existence of other beings in the world is an echo of my being too. It is an inverse relationship in the sense that ‘if I exist in the world, you exist too.’ The artist reflects other beings through his painting, which means his painting is a window to an encounter with our sensory world. For the next step, I want to provide a clear description of how the self has merged with the world by shifting in awareness before and after practicing different kinds of meditation.

7.4 Descriptions of How the Self and World Connect Together Before and After Practicing Meditation

The role of the gallery and the nature of the artworks helped participants to engage in the meditative mood before practicing different kinds of meditation by attuning their bodies different times to connect with the artworks and the whole environment. For example, Participant A did not pay attention to her body, movement, feelings, and breathing because of tiredness, which distracted her from being aware of the world around her. Later, she made some connections with the world around her when she found what her body needed – calmness – from the artworks and

the gallery. By this time, her intentionality shifted, and she saw some details in the artworks, such as geometry shapes, creek, and waterfalls.

On the other hand, Participant B was aware of her body and the world around her; for example, in the gallery, she recognized the sound of our steps on the floor, and she was aware of another objects' existence (the researcher and Participant A) which helped her to connect with the environment as a whole. The gallery and the artworks affected her physically and mindfully, calling her to shift the rhythms of her body and focus more on some narrowing details on the artworks. Moreover, the meditative mood around Participant B helped her intentionality to shift from different artworks to the specific one – Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*). This kind of artwork called her attention to look slowly and think mindfully about her own ideas even before practicing different kinds of meditation in order to connect the self with different worlds.

In my painting, I depicted the meditative moment between Participant B and Artwork 5 (*Square Grid*) when she adjusted her body several times to get the maximal grip of her visual, bodily, and perceptual experience (Figure 14). This painting embodied how Participant B made her back very straight even before practicing meditation when she was looking mindfully at this artwork in order to reveal the invisible world. This painting showed a deep connection between the participant and the artwork even before practicing meditation as a way to understand how the reversibility happened between them. Also, I emphasized the invisible fleshy mood between the subject and the object in the whole environment as one Gestalt by giving a sense of fuzziness and blurriness. To embody the concept of invisibility in her perceptual experience, I imitated some of the crossing lines (the grid) in this artwork on Participant B's body to represent the meditative moment of being between the two different worlds (in the chiasm). Even though Participant B did not recognize the moment (the chiasm) when the self disappeared and engaged with this

artwork, she became aware of the relationship between the two opposite sides: visible and invisible, subject and object, exterior and interior, or self and world.

Figure 14: Painting 10. This figure depicts the meditative moment between Participant B and this artwork when she adjusted her body several times to get the maximal grip of her visual, bodily, and perceptual experience.

In addition to the role of the gallery and the artworks, practicing different kinds of meditation helped the participants to be aware of their bodies and the world around them (see Table D.3). For example, practicing the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing helped Participant A to not only increase her awareness of the self that was "disappeared from memory," but also of her whole body by understanding the depth of reversibility when she felt how her skin could touch and be touched at the same time. Merleau-Ponty (1993, 2004, 2012) reflected on the moment of the reversibility that happens between the subject and the object when they become one thing. Also, her mind was drifting several times in the beginning, but by using meditation she could make a connection between her body and mind by focusing on the present moment when the self immersed in the world unconsciously.

Moreover, the walking meditation gave her a free place to move differently by noticing

her “feet and how they connect to the ground,” and how her “eyes and glance connect with the environment.” The walking meditation helped Participant A to be aware of her body, senses, and the whole environment around her, which allowed her to connect the self with the world. Merleau-Ponty (2012) reflected on this phenomenon of the moment of convergence (the chiasm) between the self and the world. This moment of the perception that happened when her body was unconsciously intertwining in the flesh allowed her to engage effectively with the world to reach the essence of the visual and perceptual experience. For instance, there was a secret language (mystery) between her body and some of these artworks that attracted her attention unconsciously because of their movement, repetition, and silence, which helped her to walk mindfully and look slowly to merge the self in the invisible world. Practicing meditation before visiting the galley helped Participant A open more possibilities to discover some patterns in the artworks and also in the environment as a whole.

Figure 15: Painting 11. This figure depicts the mood of the meditative environment that happened between the subject (participant) and the object (artwork).

Merleau-Ponty (1968) described the meaning of the flesh that helped the body and the world to merge together; he highlighted the notion that the flesh is not the body, and not an idea,

but rather a general unconscious communication with the world. To emphasize the visible and invisible dimensions of the perceptual experience of my participants, I tried to depict the mood of the holistic meditative environment that happened between the subject (participant) and the object (artwork) by emphasizing how the invisible flesh made a harmonious connection between the self and the world to reach the moment of convergence (chiasm) of the perceptual experience (Figure 15).

Figure 16: Painting 12. This figure reflects on how the participants were engaging visually, physically, and perceptually with the whole environment (as one Gestalt) and with some particular artworks.

In Paintings 11 and 12 (Figures 15 and 16), I tried to depict the invisible experience of the phenomenon by mimicking some details on the patterns of the artworks and painted the participants' clothes to reflect the meditative moment when a connection was created between the participants and the artworks. In these two paintings, I reflected on how my participants were engaging visually, physically, and perceptually with the whole environment (as one Gestalt) and with some particular artworks. Also, I portrayed how the artworks called my participants' attention and asked them to change their body postures and movement to transfer the self

between two opposite worlds: the visible and the invisible. In addition, I used the feeling of fuzziness and blurriness as a way of showing the fleshly invisible mood that was created between the subject and the object in the meditative environment.

Indeed, both participants felt this kind of flesh between their bodies and the world through the contact of their feet on the floor, which helped them to develop their perceptual experience of being in the world. Besides, these paintings play a significant role in this visual research by capturing the holistic phenomenological experience, in a way reflecting not just the participants' experience but also my perceptual experience when I observed them encountering the visual experience in the gallery. These paintings represented visible the invisible flesh existing between participants, the environment, and the researcher, revealing the fundamental meaning of the phenomenon as a whole.

In addition, while practicing the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing (see Table D.3), Participant B faced different internal and external distractions which prevented her from engaging in the meditative practices (see Table D.4 and Table D.5). For example, she felt some disturbing physical sensations, and she wasn't comfortable participating in the guided meditation because she felt somebody forced her to be still. Also, her mind was drifting several times, which prevented her from focusing on the present moment. However, due to a high level of bodily awareness and prolonged practices of meditation, Participant B shifted her intentionality by using some strategies that helped her to bracket her thoughts and feelings in order to connect the mind and the body together. Some of these activities were: focusing on her breathing, the clock on the wall, and the air conditioning; also, sometimes she was holding her hands and listening to the leader of the meditation if his words helped her to be aware of the present moment. Moreover, the walking meditation induced Participant B to be aware of her

body and the world, when there was no dualism between them, by opening her eyes and moving without any certain target. The walking meditation was more relaxing, and that helped her to avoid thinking about her body's distraction because of moving mindfully and looking slowly (see Table D.3).

Participant B had a higher level of awareness of how to be in the present moment and how to appreciate her body and the world around her. She understood on which level she needed to make a connection with her world, and when she needed to switch to another object in order to find the maximal grip of this experience. For instance, after practicing meditation, Participant B ignored me, as a researcher, and didn't care about my presence, as a way to project the self into the world without thinking of any external distractions that shifted her attention away from the art. She stated that "I think because I practice this so often since I was young, I've always been very aware of my body because of the different things I've done."

In addition to the previous practices of bracketing her thoughts and feelings to concentrate on the present moment and engage in the meditative mood, her intentionality shifted to look at some particular artworks when she was in the exhibition that caught her attention when she practiced the walking meditation. Her experience with different kinds of meditation helped her to create some meditative strategies, as kinds of phenomenological bracketing, to be in the meditative mood, such as clearing her mind and senses from any distractions, walking mindfully, and looking slowly to relax and focus on the present moment.

Thus, these mindfulness practices (different physical and mindful activities to bracket her thoughts and feelings) helped her to connect with the artworks and reach the essence of her visual and perceptual experience in order to transform the self between different worlds. Merleau-Ponty (1969) recommended the importance of improving one's awareness of the world

through prolonged practices to reach the level of the maximal grip of the perceptual and visual experience. Besides changing her body postures to create a connection between her body and the world around her, especially the artworks, she used some other physical practices to help her focus on the present moment. One of them was noticing her breathing when she was looking at the artworks. Participant B was aware of how to make a connection between her body and the artworks when she asked herself to notice her breathing here and now. She stated, “Like I would be standing in front of something and think: Oh, I should notice my breath now.” By practicing mindfulness of breathing, Participant B connected her body with the artworks in the present moment, so that helped her to get the essence of her experience.

Moreover, Participant B stated that every day we are different because of our state of mind, which allowed her to connect the self with the world by making a new interpretation of her perceptual experience. She pointed out that “I mean I did notice that, but I didn’t connect it to like myself. I didn’t make like a personal connection.” According to Merleau-Ponty (1993), the relationship between the subject and the object in the world reflects the phenomenological concept, which is the instrument of universal magic – the mirror. This tool aligns with the meaning of the reversibility when there is no dualism between the self and the world. For instance, Participant B moved her body everywhere unconsciously in order to search for a significant meaning in these artworks that called her attention so that she might make an interpretation and a connection between the self and the world to find the maximal grip of the perceptual experience.

7.5 Summary

In the end, both participants have experienced different kinds of changes in their perception, self, body, and art. By walking mindfully around the gallery and looking slowly at

the work of art, participants could adjust the tempos and rhythms of their bodies by balancing their physical, emotional, and mental reactions. Besides the mood of the gallery and the nature of the artworks, practicing different kinds of meditation helped Participant B to discover unseen details in the artworks and get to the maximal grip of the visual and perceptual experience. Both participants imagined variations of narratives and meanings when they made some connection with the artworks in the gallery setting. Participant A has experienced another kind of perceptual grip: Gestalt shift, which helped her to broaden her focus to shift it away from a specific artwork to the whole environment. Moreover, both participants were experiencing the space between the work of art and themselves – chiasm when the self has transferred between two worlds.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Why Does Meditation Work Better in the Art Classroom than with Other Subjects?

As an art educator, I was curious to investigate the connection between meditation and art in the field of education, especially in the art classroom. Using art and meditation together allows a kind of loosening up of the self to discover new possibilities, such as being mindful of the present moment by making a connection between self and world to develop one's visual, perceptual, and embodied experiences. Meditation is artful in having a kind of sensual or aesthetic dimension to connect the body with the mind, the self with the world, the inside with the outside, and the visible with the invisible. Also, art evokes sensation because of its aesthetic or sensual dimension that enhances meditation in the classroom. Art and meditation each benefit from the other because meditation already has a strong aesthetic element and vice versa.

As outlined before, this tight connection between art and meditation has been traditionally embodied in mandala, iconic, and memento mori paintings. However, these spaces are quiet, defined by the repetition of prayer and by certain somatic practices like breathing or chanting that are similar to the sacredness of churches and museums, and in that way, they are different from the nature of the art classroom, which is noisy, distracting, and busy. Nevertheless, art educators need to understand how to adapt this kind of practice for non-meditative places, such as the art classroom, by considering the importance of selecting which kind of art and meditation to practice, clearing the mind and the body from internal distraction (thoughts and feelings) and external distraction (the whole environment) to focus on the present moment, and engaging other senses in artistic meditative activities in order to transfer the self between two different worlds to discover the fundamental meaning of the perceptual experience.

Art education can take advantage of these connections in galleries, museums, and classrooms, creating opportunities for mindful art-making and artful mindfulness.

In the following discussion of the fundamental meanings of this study, I focus on answering this question: What effects did the meditative environment – as a combination of factors – have on the participants? The fundamental meanings may help art educators to understand the importance of practicing meditation in the art classroom, but also to recognize the importance of meditation in relation to other variables such as repetition, environmental factors, and art works discussed. In short, my study suggests that the effects of meditation cannot be isolated easily from wider influences, and that one must think holistically about interconnectedness between practice, bodies, and environments to truly understand mediation. The aim of this study is to encourage art educators to support their students and help them engage with different activities in using art and meditation practices in the class. In this chapter, I summarize the essential meanings of this study. Then I return to the literature review and relate it to those essential meanings, showing how I have filled a gap in the research. Also, I outline the limitations of the study. Next, I suggest some implications for art education and museum education, a discussion which that ends with considerations of some possibilities for non-meditative places, such as art classrooms that are more noisy, distracting, and busy. Finally. I indicate some future lines of research that I am interested in pursuing through additional research and study.

8.2 Discussion of the Essential Meanings of this Study

Meditation correlates to perceptual changes; specifically, walking mindfully in the gallery and looking slowly at artworks while practicing guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of breathing induces the three types of perceptual changes: shift in the balance of

tempos and rhythms of the body postures, movement, and breathing; shift in focus of intentionality to achieve different kinds of grip: maximal grip, Gestalt shift in the grip, and imaginative variations within the grip; and shift in awareness of connectedness between the self and the world to open up more possibilities in sometimes subtle and sometimes dramatic ways.

Moreover, meditative practice in this setting allowed one of my participants to shift her intentionality by narrowing her focus on unseen details in the artwork to discover the maximal grip of her perceptual experience after starting with a shift in the tempos and rhythms of body movement, posture, and breathing. This kind of change of grip allowed her to make more interpretations in order to reveal the fundamental meaning of her perceptual experience by discovering who she is in the world at the moment of reversibility that took place between the subject (participant) and the object (artwork) in the gallery (world). To clarify this point of view (in other words), “Maximal grip” was a part of chiasm when the participant tried to gear her body into the world so that a phenomenon could become clear. The participant wanted to synchronize herself with something in the world, and her body seemed to be looking for a perfect location and a specific moment to find the crossing point. Thus, we might speculate that the object (artwork) was looking at the subject (participant), and the subject was looking at the point that switched (exchanged) between her and the object, which was the chiasm, in order to reveal some meaning for the subject.

From my perspective, both participants had difficulties finding their attunement to the work of art or hearing the call from the work of art. They were trying to find the chiasm, which means the point of intersection with work of art. Therefore, another fundamental meaning of this study is that meditation in relation to a host of other factors appears to affect each participant differently in that one of the participants shifted her intentionality, sometimes broadening focus

away from particular works of art to the whole environment (a Gestalt shift in the phenomenological grip). For instance, I asked Participant A (participant review) about the reasons behind her looking at the whole environment, and she said she knew the artworks and had looked at them on the first day, so she wanted to look at something else. Moreover, an interesting fundamental meaning of this study is that sometimes the participants' intentionality shifted to noticing different patterns and/or producing more interpretations (imaginative shifts in grip). However, with both participants, there was a kind of struggling to find the chiasm – the maximal grip – the point of touching those artworks. Through a combination of meditation and repetition, they experimented with finding the point of reversibility between subject and object, visibility and invisibility.

In addition, another essential meaning indicates that different forms of meditation might work better for some participants more than others. Practicing the guided and walking meditations with mindfulness of breathing either directly or indirectly affected perceptual experience but it does so in different ways for different individuals. For example, the guided meditation helped Participant A to focus on her body by making a connection between the mind and the body in the present moment. By contrast, Participant B did not like this kind of meditation because it forced her to be still when she wanted to move, so that she could focus on the pace of her breathing to become relaxed and calm. Moreover, the walking meditation and mindfulness of breathing aided them in their awareness of the connection between the self and the world in the present moment. In particular, Participant B became more relaxed by practicing the walking meditation with breathing because of the freedom of achieving a balance between movement and stillness. Also, the walking meditation and mindfulness of breathing helped Participant B to bracket her internal distractions (thoughts and feelings) and the external

distractions.

As I have indicated above, meditation should not be thought of in isolation of the complex personal and environmental factors surrounding and informing the practice. These meditative factors included the participants' seeing the same artworks for three consecutive days, spending enough time (20 minutes) in the gallery, being in a small meditative place, looking at a few meditative artworks, having a small group of participants, adjusting their bodies when encountering the artworks, walking mindfully, and looking slowly at the artworks. As with all of phenomenological research, the global whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts. The lesson here is that meditation is a complex phenomenon and should not be thought of as merely a "technique" that can be used anywhere with anyone and simply "work" to produce specific effects. Next, I return to the literature review and illustrate how I have filled a gap in the research relating to those fundamental meanings.

8.3 Return to the Previous Literature Review

Many studies have discussed the importance of the body and senses for obtaining the aesthetic experience, which relates to the phenomenology of the body theory by Merleau-Ponty in contrast to Cartesian thought, which privileges the mind above the body. This study not only focused on the importance of the body and senses; it also discussed the role of meditation in effecting certain perceptual shifts in the tempos and rhythms of the body, focus/intentionality, and awareness of connectedness between the self and the world. The most significant essential meaning of this study relates to how meditation affects the perception of the maximal grip in Merleau-Ponty's terms. However, this study is unique because it expands Merleau-Ponty's theory of maximal grip by exploring additional fundamental meanings of the different types of changes in grip: The Gestalt shift in the grip and imaginative variations with the grip. Moreover,

the study fills the gap in the existing literature, which did not include enough data analysis or similar fundamental meanings related to the theory of embodiment by providing more details on how practicing different kinds of meditation could affect the visual, bodily, and perceptual experience.

Furthermore, Shusterman highlighted in his pragmatic approach the significance of embodiment experience in aesthetic appreciation by understanding how to apply the theoretical approach along with the practical approach. Shusterman indicated how to use somatic training with mindfulness meditation and breathing in the academic philosophical environment, but he did not mention how it could be applied in the art education and museum education fields. In this study, I verified correlations between mediation and different perceptual experiences of art that might be useful for art educators in galleries, museums, and classrooms to consider. As my literature review showed, rarely have different kinds of meditation in art education and museum education been applied in one study. Also, there is not enough research on guided meditation, and only a few pieces of research have focused on walking meditation, while more studies have talked about breathing practices.

I initially had some concerns regarding the use of different kinds of meditation, but the essential meanings of this study revealed the significance of utilizing this combination of meditation types, even though there were varying reactions or perspectives from the participants about practicing different kinds of meditation. For example, both participants stated how practicing guided and walking meditation helped them to relax and be aware of their bodies and the environment around them. However, Participant B liked the walking meditation and breathing more than the guided meditation because she didn't want anyone to control her movement and stillness. Also, practicing the walking meditation and breathing helped Participant

B bracket her internal distractions (thoughts and feelings) and external distractions. Thus, different kinds of meditation affect different types of people in different ways and this should be considered by anyone interested in implementing meditation programs in educational settings. From a detailed phenomenological analysis, it is difficult at this time to pinpoint one practice as "better" or "worse" than another. Instead, it might be more important to think about the many different forms of meditation available in relation to goals, setting, and practitioners.

In addition to the discovering the important role of using different kinds of meditation with art education students in a gallery setting, this study is unique because of its use of phenomenological research as a kind of meditative process carried out in a meditative environment with richly meditative artworks. I concentrated on the role of the environment in helping the participants to project themselves into the meditative mood by playing on the effects of lightness and darkness in promoting calmness and quietness. This might mean that using different environments with different artworks could produce very different results. An interesting question to consider is: Can reversibility be induced when there is a breakdown between meditative practices and environments? I worked hard to correlate practice and environment so that there would be maximal opportunity for encountering reversibility, but this is not always an option for educators, nor might it always be desirable (as dissonance between elements could produce their own, unique educational opportunities).

Moreover, I highlighted the effectiveness of preparing the somatic mindfulness workshop and indicated how the project was organized in more elaborate detail than is typical in other studies. This is because of the sensitivity of phenomenology toward the whole experience and toward the role of the researcher in the design and implementation of research. In particular, I prepared myself by practicing meditation with Brett Wallace before conducting the somatic

mindfulness workshop with the participants. In addition, few studies have indicated the relationship between the researchers and their studies, and how the characteristics of the researchers could affect their research. By contrast, this study clarified how the characteristics of the artistic-phenomenological researcher could affect the study; thus, the researcher understands that she needed to be aware of how her culture, religion, and language could affect this study in order to achieve the goal at which she aimed. For example, I used my native Arabic language to describe various meditative body patterns of the participants for the purpose of introducing certain Arabic language vocabulary and also for the purpose of adding more words to the English dictionary. In addition to using the Arabic language, I used my experience in painting to add visual description methods to analyze the data, thus revealing the fundamental meaning of the reversibility that took place between the meditative body (subject) and the artwork (object) in the gallery (world).

Finally, the later work by Merleau-Ponty demonstrated the importance of visual art, especially painting, to help us understand phenomena; also, he made a distinction between painting and other fields, such as photography, language (philosophy), linear perspective, and geometry. However, Merleau-Ponty barely discussed Cezanne's portraits or the potentially useful role of photography in phenomenological research. Hence, the special contribution of this study is that it used visual description (photographic painting) and verbal description (written description) to reveal the essence of the phenomenon. In addition to using the two phenomenological methods—verbal and visual descriptions—to explore the fundamental meaning of the perceptual experience, I have used various other phenomenological research methods, such as participant observations, interviews, and phenomenological descriptions along with visual research methods. That is, I adopted the role of photographer/visual ethnographer,

using a variety of qualitative phenomenological research methods not employed by other studies.

I hope that this multi-modal approach to research has captured some of the complexity of the interactions between bodies, art, and environments that would have been missed if the researcher had opted for just one method. Here, I want to clarify how the visual research helped me to simplify this kind of complexity between these different elements; for example, while the verbal (written) description separated the three types of changes (movement, body postures, and breathing) and distinguished between them, the visual (photographic painting) description set them together again as one Gestalt to reveal the essence of the perceptual experience of the participants.

8.4 Limitation and Challenges

In this study, I faced certain challenges and obstacles that I worked hard to overcome in order to succeed in the somatic mindfulness project (SMP). One of these challenges was understanding my role as a phenomenological researcher. During the personal narrative part of the study, I asked myself many questions: what do I need to observe? How I observe my participants? What kind of reaction do I need to recognize when the participants are encountering the artworks? These questions opened my eyes and helped me understand how I could make a connection between myself and the whole environment. Another obstacle was that the location of the dance room was far from the Gough gallery, as I noticed when I was practicing the guided meditation with Wallace before conducting the somatic mindfulness workshop. Later, I planned how I could help the participants ignore various distractions in the environment that might affect their attention by asking them to listen to the mindfulness audio when they were practicing the walking meditation before visiting the gallery. Certainly, my personal narrative experience with Brett Wallace in his guided meditation session in the GDAC helped me to organize the workshop

and to recognize some problems that could affect the participants' engagement in the meditative process.

At that time, I thought carefully about the effectiveness of using the different kinds of meditation, the guided meditation with mindfulness of breathing and the walking meditation, to help the participants develop their perceptual and visual experience. I tried to understand how these different kinds of meditation impact our bodies and minds by practicing different kinds of meditation to see how they affected me mentally, physically, and spiritually. Also, I talked with an expert, Brett Wallace, who has experience in different types of meditation, and that helped me later to organize my workshop. In fact, Wallace didn't agree that it would be effective to use the walking meditation after the guided meditation because he felt they would have different effects on the body and mind. In my view, the organization of these different kinds of meditation has a significant impact that could help my participants to clear their minds from internal and external distractions by connecting the mind with the body in the present moment. Then they practiced the walking meditation to help them become aware of how the self could be connected with the environment around them. These kinds of practice, the guided meditation and the walking meditation, aided the participants to achieve a balance in the tempos and rhythms between their stillness and their movement. At the same time, I now see how it might be useful to also separate the two to try to understand differences and similarities between them. This would be an interesting possibility for future research.

In addition to selecting different kinds of meditation, another real challenge was to identify the kinds of artworks and the kind of gallery that would most effectively help my participants in the workshop. In the beginning, I thought that instead of choosing a specific artwork for my participants to look at after practicing meditation, I should give my participants

the freedom to walk mindfully in the gallery and look slowly at any artworks with which they wanted to connect, without any intervention from the researcher. My challenge was to determine what kind of gallery and artworks could best help my participants. Therefore, I sought to make a distinction between different galleries in order to understand which one of them would be the best for my somatic mindfulness workshop. Because of the nature of the meditative mood of the "Sculptured Light" gallery, I chose it, and I asked my participants to visit it before and after practicing the different kinds of meditation. As stated above, an alternative approach might be to specifically pick works of art or gallery spaces that are intentionally not meditative to see resulting effects. Reversibility might still be possible, but it might be experienced differently on the level of the body.

In addition, one of the greatest challenges was how internal distractions (thoughts and feelings) and external distractions (the environment around me) affected the way I, as a phenomenological researcher, observed my participants in the somatic mindfulness workshop. The interesting result was that because of the internal and external distractions that affected my continuing observation of the participants, I challenged myself by bracketing these things out and returning my mind to be in the present moment of my participants' experiences. Recently, I have reflected on the difficulty of bracketing my internal distractions from thinking about different concerns in the environment by shifting my intentionality to focus on observing the participants during the meditation session.

In sum, I highly recommend meditative practices for the phenomenological researcher as a method that may help them to shift their intentionality from the natural attitude to the phenomenological attitude by bracketing off internal or external distractions in order to become aware of ways of making a connection between the mind and body in the present moment. Here,

I would like to provide concrete suggestions for phenomenological researchers, such as being attentive and receptive to open the self to the context fairly without personal bias or prejudice, understanding how and at what level they might affect the study and vice versa, and considering the possibility of variation in the outcomes as there might be some unintended or unexpected outcomes from the study. This might be the most important methodological insight to be taken away from this study. Phenomenology itself is a kind of meditative practice and can only benefit from incorporating some of the mindfulness techniques used in this study into its own notion of bracketing and bridling.

Finally, I wish to point out certain limitations. One is that it would have been better to have more days devoted to the somatic mindfulness workshop, instead of just having three days; that might have helped me to observe my participants and understand their bodily reactions in order to note in greater detail how they acted when encountering visual art. Also, because of the limited time available for the workshop, it was hard for me to include the art-making practices in the somatic mindfulness workshop instead of just practicing art appreciation alone, including art-making practices might have resulted in different fundamental meaning in this study. Moreover, instead of including only two female participants, it might be a good idea to use a more diverse study sample to include, for example, different types of participants in order to include more variation in the fundamental meaning of the study. A more diverse sample might include children, men, or people from different cultures.

8.5 Implications for Art Education

In this section, I suggest some recommendations for art educators to help their students in the classroom through the use of various forms of meditation with visual art to develop their students' physical and perceptual experience.

8.5.1 Familiarity with Multiple Forms of Meditation

Art educators interested in using meditation need to be familiar with varied sorts of meditation. Merleau-Ponty (1969) emphasized the importance of improving one's awareness of the world through prolonged practice to reach the level of the maximal grip of the perceptual and visual experience. Before practicing different kinds of meditation, both participants were wandering around the exhibition and looking at the artworks without a particular goal, but they were embarked on an exploratory journey to their visual world. In fact, one participant achieved reversibility to a greater extent than the other one due to the significant role of prolonged practices of different kinds of meditation in her life. Particularly, Participant B used different meditative practices to help her bracket the internal (thoughts and feelings) and external (the environment) distractions in order to focus on the present moment and achieve the maximal grip on her lived experience. Participant B was looking at objects slowly and walking mindfully around the gallery to discover something interesting, especially when she encountered the artworks, by intertwining herself between two different worlds – visible and invisible – to obtain the fundamental meaning of the experience. By continuing the prolonged practice, Participant B understood how to be in a high level of awareness of her body, senses, and the world around her.

In addition to looking slowly at objects and walking mindfully, the participants engaged in certain other phenomenological meditative activities that focused on creating a balance in the pace and rhythm of their body postures, movements, and breathing to create a connection between the body and the artworks. One interesting example of meditative practices was that Participant B was paying attention to her breathing while she was looking at the artworks. Participant B became more aware of how to make a connection between her body and the artworks when she asked herself to notice her breathing in the here and now. She stated, "Like I

would be standing in front of something and think: Oh, I should notice my breath now." By practicing mindfulness of breathing, Participant B connected her body with the artworks in the present moment, which helped her to achieve the essence of her experience.

Furthermore, by continuing to practice different kinds of meditation, art educators will learn how to bracket their internal and external distractions in order to project the self into the meditative mood. Participant B moved her body everywhere in order to search for significant meaning in these artworks that called her attention, so that she might achieve an interpretation and a connection between the self and the world to find the maximal grip of her experience. She pointed out that "I also didn't notice as much you are taking pictures, or I didn't care. I was like whatever it's fine." In the meantime, Participant B practiced more meditative activities that helped her ignore the environment that might disrupt her attention to focus on specific artworks in order to make a connection between the self and the environment.

In fact, I was curious about whether Participant B bracketed the internal and external distractions on purpose and consciously by practicing different meditative activities. To learn more about this question, I needed to conduct a "peer review" by asking her about her experience on the third day, and about whether her movement was intentional. Participant B said:

> I remember that third day not feeling like I had to look at all of the pieces (like I did the first day). I found myself pulled towards a couple pieces but also away from them, I would find myself looking at the shadows around the pedestals or at the walls, floor, ceilings. I was aware of allowing myself to be distracted by whatever caught my eye (I didn't force myself to continue looking at the art), but I didn't plan for it, it just happened.

That is a perfect illustration of my argument because the experience is not about the mind when there is no planning to make a connection between the subject and the object. Rather, it is all about being in the world and allowing the moment between the body and the artworks to exist, in order to be receptive by practicing different meditative activities that minimize distractions to

attain a maximal grip on the experience. Thus, these meditative activities could help art educators bracket their internal (thoughts and feelings) and external (the environment) distractions by focusing on the present moment, thus revealing the fundamental meaning of their visual and perceptual experience.

8.5.2 Variation in the Outcomes

Art educators should also be aware of how outcomes vary, and aware that emphasis should be on helping students reflect critically on how their aesthetic experience changes. There were variations in the level of the maximal grip for the participants because of differences in their familiarity with meditation and using methods to bracket their internal (thoughts and feelings) and external (the environment) distractions by focusing on the present moment and revealing the fundamental meaning of their visual and perceptual experience. Participant B reached the moment of reversibility with the artwork more than Participant A did due, in part, to the significant role of the prolonged practice in different kinds of meditation. Thus, not everyone has the same kind of perceptual experience, but their experiences might be variations of an invariant: they might all be trying to practice certain kinds of slow looking and doing by modifying their bodies, but they might do so in different ways and have different results and outcomes.

Moreover, Participant B was very aware of how to connect her body with the environment; she was agitated to discover certain details in a particular artwork that reflected the self in the world. She was attuned to the call of the artworks that helped her to reach the maximal grip by making her back straight when she encountered Artwork 5. This is very important insight because she was not consciously aware of it; this means that her body itself was trying to adjust itself. She was not aided by the conscious mind; she was not in control of what her body was

doing. Therefore, the most important outcome of the study is that Participant B was able to find the moment of reversibility (chiasm) between the subject (the self) and the object (the artwork) in the environment, and although Participant A did not reach that level, she could have experienced other small benefits or different kinds of shifts that might have their own unique effects.

Furthermore, Participant B was familiar with different kinds of meditation and how they could affect her body and mind, but Participant A did not know how to make a connection between the self and the world or how to bracket her internal and external distractions. For example, because Participant A was so tired, she found that everything looked tiring to her, or she enjoyed projecting her tiredness on the world. She was not open to the call or the look or the gaze of the artworks outside of this tired mood. Tiredness had an unexpected effect: shifting her intentionality from particular artworks to the environment as a whole.

In addition, I was curious to get more information from her, in a "peer review," about why she had this kind of experience, broadening her perceptual focus to shift away from particular works of art; she stated that because she had seen the artworks the first day, she wanted to look at something else. Tiredness at looking thus created the opportunity for a Gestalt shift in foreground and background. Such unintended consequences of mood and bodily state greatly impact meditative results. Thus, any educator interested in meditation must be careful not to assume that 10 minutes of breathing with automatically result in certain kinds of outcomes in attentiveness.

In summary, at the most important point there can be a deep meaningful embodied sensation of the artworks when there is a range of effects, but those affects all have something to do with small alterations in perception as it relates to the body and environment in a holistic way.

Thus, we are not looking for one outcome. While maximal grip might be most preferable in terms of the richest experience of a work of art, other, unintended shifts in perceptual grip reveal their unique outcomes that might be equally educational. I highly recommend the importance of this pedagogical suggestion in terms of facilitating critical reflection on whatever happens in the educational environment. For example, I suggest that art educators need to introduce some kinds of (somatic and mindfulness) activities and (feeling and sensory) questions after the practicing of meditation that might help students describe their unique visual, physical, and perceptual experiences in order to make a connection between the mind and the body in the current moment. These kinds of activities and questions are similar to what I have done with my participants in the somatic mindfulness workshop.

8.5.3 The Role of the Environment and the Chosen Artworks

As I have indicated above, art educators should consider the importance of the environment as a learning space that encourages their students to practice meditation. Many scholars have highlighted the importance of the place for learning (Brubaker, 2003; Ellsworth, 2005; Vagle, 2014; Zahavi, 2005, 2011). Ellsworth (2005) explained how the visitors' body movements and sensations help them to understand an exhibition and open more possibilities for them. In my study, I tightly connected meditation with meditative works of art in a meditative space, creating an environment that reinforced the state of mind which I was seeking to instill in my participants. This might be an important consideration for art teachers who want to incorporate meditation into their classrooms: it might not be enough to isolate the practice from the rest of the classroom life. In other words, creating a holistic environment that reinforces some of the mindfulness of meditation could be crucial.

In addition, besides the mood of the exhibition, the role of the artist and his artworks helped the participants to be in a state of mind even before practicing the guided and walking meditations with mindfulness of breathing. Many philosophers and scholars have discussed the power of the artist and visual art, especially painting, to improve the aesthetic experience (Brubaker, 2003; Carman, 2008; Clark, 2015; Guentchev, 2010; Hung, 2013; Johnson, 1993; Low, 2000; Mazis, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1993; Quinn, 2009; Toadvine, 1997; Vagle, 2014; Wrathall, 2010). Merleau-Ponty (1993) pointed out the significance of the role of the artist and his art, which have the power to call the viewer's attention to recognize the world around him. Wrathall (2010) continued that art,

> Merleau-Ponty proceeds to explain, has something to do with the kind of seeing that the artist practices, and the way that when the artist records what he sees on the canvas, it allows us to also take part in his way of seeing the world. (p.11)

The artist of the *Structured Light* exhibition created a meditative mood in the whole environment not only by selecting the kinds of artworks, but also by choosing only a few artworks, making the balance between the movement of the shadow and light, reflecting the sound of the projector, producing the calm dim light in the Gough gallery, and selecting a quiet location (the Gough gallery) in the GDAC. All these thoughtful factors played a significant role in the experience, as discussed with my participants.

This returns my attention to what Merleau-Ponty (1993) clarified regarding how visual art, as a kind of meditation, helps the viewers to be aware of the world around them by inducing an embodied, perceptual, and mental experience. In addition, the depth of this kind of artwork contributes to creating a contemplative mood to attract the participants' attention and engage their bodies and senses, a process in which they met the needs of their bodies for calmness and relaxation. Art educators and their students need to pay attention to how the artworks call them

to engage in the meditative mood by looking slowly and walking mindfully to access the essence of the visual and perceptual experience. Moreover, the visual experience can help us to understand the relationship between the visible and the invisible. For instance, the photographic paintings captured not just the experience of my participants but also my own experience, as an artistic-phenomenological researcher, who shared the visible and the invisible flesh existing between the participants, the environment, and myself to discover the fundamental meaning of the perceptual experience. This means that the visual research reflects the whole and not just the parts of the phenomenon, revealing its fundamental features as co-constructed between environment, participants, and researcher.

It is my assumption that the artworks were encountered by my participants solicited certain kinds of reactions from them. The artwork seemed to ask the participants to create a balance between the movement and stillness in order to remain in a meditative mood. Sometimes these artworks called the participants to stand in front of them in order to perceive some unseen details, or to stand at a specific angle for a short or longer time in order to imagine some other patterns. These artworks asked the participants to sit on the bench or on the floor, or even asked them to squat or sway back and forth so that they might make a sort of connection with the artworks. Moreover, these works of art provoked the participants to walk around them and look from different directions, which could help the participants to shift their intentionality to focus on unseen details and discover the maximal grip of their visual and perceptual experience. This call was received in different ways by my participants based on their physical conditions, background, and emotional states, but the point is that some kind of call was received, creating moments of perceptual shift.

In sum, not only did practicing the guided and walking meditation with mindfulness of

breathing help the participants to develop their visual and perceptual experience, but also the mood of the exhibition, when they were walking mindfully and looking slowly at the visual art for three consecutive days, shaped their experience in important ways. This study seems to indicate that meditation is not a singular practice but rather must be approached as a single component to an overall contemplative environment.

Indeed, my new discovery is that *the actual meditation achieved by practicing different kinds of meditation might not be as important as making the space of looking more meditative as a whole*. In particular, I designed the whole process to cultivate a kind of *meditative environment* in order to help my participants project themselves into the meditative mood. However, I was working not only to allow them to practice meditation and then look at art; rather, I created a total meditative experience for them. For example, I spent a lot of time thinking about who the best research sample would be and what kind of knowledge experience (familiarity) I would need in participants; what kind of art would be the most meditative; what gallery would be the most calming; how many days would be ideal for the workshop, and how long each session would be, and what kind of meditation practices would work better for them. I considered all of these criteria regarding my workshop in order to help my participants achieve a level of meditative mood. In fact, due to the subjective consideration that these criteria are specific to the meditative environment, someone may consider that these artworks are not meditative, or the gallery is not meditative enough. Thus, I cannot generalize what the meditative environment might be because it is not the same for everyone.

Finally, art educators need to consider the importance of being familiar with different kinds of meditation by understanding the importance of prolonged practice. Also, they need to be aware of variations in the outcomes and unexpected consequences of practices. Art educators

need to consider the role of the environment and the artworks. However, the question looms again of how to apply these implications in non-meditative environments, such as the art classroom that is noisy, distracting, and busy with a large group of students. Importantly, I want to propose some possibilities for art educators to create as meditative an environment as possible for their students to practice meditation in the art classroom.

Before starting practicing meditation, art educators need to clarify the importance of meditation for their students to help them make a connection between the body and the mind in the present moment, as a way to attract their attention before engaging in the practice. Art educators need to consider preparing a quiet place and providing appropriate light for their students; they need to ask them to be quiet and silent to bracket the internal (thoughts and feelings) and external distractions (the environment). Students need to know how to find a comfortable position for their bodies to start practicing meditation.

Particularly, I recommend Shusterman's techniques of body scan for practicing mindfulness and somatic activities. For example, art educators can ask their students to start with mindfulness activities by counting their breaths and focusing on their breathing while they are closing their eyes. Art educators can use language in this stage to help students understand how to pay attention to their bodies in the current moment. After practicing mindfulness activities, art educators should ask students to engage in some somatic activities, such as stretching their bodies, to engage in the next step of this process, which is practicing different kinds of art activities, as a kind of meditation practice.

Next, art educators can ask their students to practice art-appreciation and/or art-making activities by engaging other senses, such as listening to mindfulness music. At the end of these activities, art educators can pose sensory and feeling questions to help students share their

physical, sensorial, and perceptual experiences with other students so that they can discover the fundamental meanings of practicing meditation.

8.6 Future Lines of Research

In this section, I further describe future research plans that I am interested in pursuing. In my previous study, I included as participants two artist participants who were familiar with phenomenological research and mindfulness meditation. For future research, I hope to study participants with other different background cultures or from different educational fields, such as meditators, to see how visual art affects their aesthetic experience. Also, I propose ideas regarding how practicing different kinds of meditation could affect the perceptual experience of the participants when they are engaging with other different types of art, such as performing arts (dance and music). Moreover, I consider including a more varied population, such as men, children, or elderly individuals; people with certain difficulties, such as ADHD or teenagers obsessed with video games; or people with diseases such as cancer, to see how practicing meditation with visual art could help them.

In addition, one of the fundamental meanings that I have discussed is that not only the meditation practice, but the art itself and the environment as meditative components of an overall experience of mindfulness. Therefore, a useful variation might be accomplished if I ask people to meditate and then ask them to look at art that is disrupting, busy, very loud, or aggressive. Also, I suggest for the future researchers that meditation should be part of being a phenomenological researcher, and they should understand various kinds of bracketing practices, such as learning how to let things (thoughts and feelings) pass and go, paying attention to the present moment, being focused and attentive to what is happening around them, and achieving a stronger body and mind connection. Further, I recommend that participants practice other different kinds of

meditation, such as Zen meditation, mantra meditation, yoga meditation, vipassana meditation, or chakra meditation, with art-appreciation and/or art-making. Also, I plan to conduct future workshops in non-meditative places, such as the art classroom, to see if there are changes in the perceptual experience of the participants.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS AND WRITTEN DISCRIPTIONS QUESTIONS

Script A.1
Participants - Art Education PhD and MA Students

Data Collection (Pre-Interview Scripts)

MB: Can you tell me if you noticed something special during the last session?

Participant (P): There were a lot of things.

MB: Okay, let's start from the beginning. What kind of bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings did you have?

(P): [interested response]

MB: What was your bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings in this moment? (look at their photos when viewing art).

(P): [interested response]

MB: Do you have any kind of a concept or metaphor to describe your bodily experiences with?

(P): [interested response]

MB: But is there more than bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings do you like to tell me about? For example, what did you notice about the arts? What about your breathing and movement?

(P): [interested response]

MB: Where you aware of yourself while viewing the art?

(P): [interested response]

MB: Could you describe how you felt in the setting (GDAC)?
(Mertens, 2010; Stelter, 2010)

Data Collection (Post-Interview Scripts)

MB: Did you notice anything in particular during your last session?

Participant (P): There were a lot of things.

MB: Okay, let's start from the beginning. How did you feel when you were meditating? What parts of your body did you feel when you were practicing guided meditation and mindfulness of breathing?

(P): [interested response]

MB: What kind of bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings did you have after practicing meditation? Did meditation affect your breathing, body postures, or movement?

(P): [interested response]

MB: What was your bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings in this moment? (show them their photos when viewing art).

(P): [interested response]

MB: Do you have any kind of a concept or metaphor to describe your bodily experiences with?

(P): [interested response]

MB: But is there more than bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings do you like to tell me about? Are there any changes to your experience visual art before and after meditation?

(P): [interested response]

MB: Could you describe more about your sense of self after the meditation?

(P): [interested response]

MB: Did your awareness of the setting (GDAC) change at all after the meditation?

(Mertens, 2010; Stelter, 2010)

Data Collection (Pre-Written Description Scripts)

Could you describe your bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings when viewing art?

What about your movement, body postures, and breathing?

What did you notice about the arts?

Could you describe your awareness of self?

Data Collection (Post-Written Description Scripts)

Did you practice guided and walking meditation with breathing before?

In our meditation sessions today, how did you feel when you were meditating? What parts of your body did you feel?

What kind of bodily experience, thoughts, or feelings did you have after practicing meditation? Did meditation affect your breathing, body postures, or movement?

Do you have any kind of a concept or metaphor to describe your bodily experiences with?

Are there any changes to your experience visual art before and after meditation?

Could you describe more about where was the self before and after meditation? What was your mind doing before and after meditation? Where was your mind before and after meditation?

Script A.2
Participants - Experts

MB: Can we have a conversation about your experience in meditation?

Participant (P): Yes, of course.

MB: Okay, let's start from the beginning and talk about the meditation program/project/workshop that you practice. So, what kind of meditation program do you practice with your participants?

(P): [interested response]

MB: Who helped you to create this program? Why and when did you create it?

(P): [interested response]

MB: What kind of meditation do you practice with your participants? Why do you choose this one specifically? What is your procedure or technique of practicing this program? (I mean how you do it?)

(P): [interested response]

MB: Do you find this program is helpful for your participants? How does it help?

(P): [interested response]

MB: Did this program change or improve over time? How? When? Why?

(P): [interested response]

APPENDIX B

DIAGRAMS

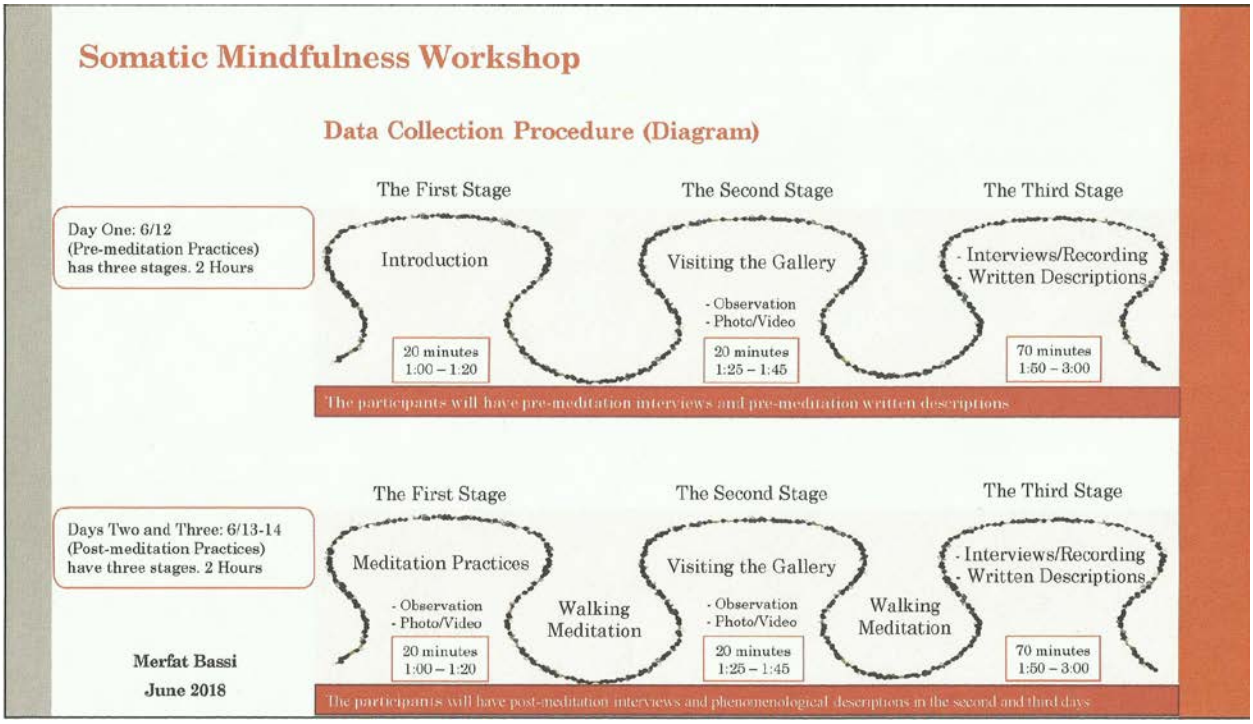

Figure B.1: The Somatic Mindfulness Workshop Diagram

Figure B.2:The GDAC Diagram

APPENDIX C

BRETT WALLACE'S SCRIPTS

Script C.1
Brett Wallace's Script 1

Meditation and Art Appreciation Script

- Sit up straight, in a comfortable position, with your feet flat on the floor or crossed at the ankles.
- Now, shut your eyes and be totally still, like a pond.
- Visualize creative light falling down on you like rain. Absorb that light and feel it relaxing you and bringing you into a creative state of mind.
- Now take four slow, deep, breaths. Breath in to account of four and exhale to a count of four. This will supercharge your brain and promote relaxation and creativity.
- Now, focus on the top of your head feeling it relax.
- Let the relaxation move down to your forehead, just let it drop.
- Now, relax your eyes and eyebrows, and relax your jaw by just letting it drop, leaving your tongue on the roof of your mouth.
- When your face is relaxed your whole body will be relaxed.
- Now relax your neck to your shoulders and let your shoulders, arms and hands go slack.
- Take 3 more deep breaths to relax your chest and back. Feel your belly go out as you breathe.
- A lot of tension can gather in the lower back, so relax your back, hips and bottom.
- Check that your face is still relaxed and relax your legs, feet and toes.
- You are totally still, relaxed and receptive to the creativity within you.
- PAUSE for a few breaths.
- Now, see yourself sculpted of water, standing in the middle of a beautiful, still pond filled with the waters of your own creativity.
- See yourself dissolve into those creative waters becoming one with them. You are a creator.
- Remain still and quiet.
- When you open your eyes, you will take note of how your body feels, how your eyes are seeing and what you are thinking about.
- You will remain still and begin.
    - Your project or
    - Your evaluation of the art you are observing today.

Script
Brett Wallace's Script # 2

Somatic Mindfulness Meditation for Art Appreciation

Relaxation Instruction

- In a quiet place with no distractions, get in a relaxed sitting position and be very,very still.
- Close your eyes and roll them upward slightly, focusing your attention on the spot between your eyes.
- Take 4 slow, deep, breaths breathing in to the count of 4 and exhaling to the count of 4.
    - Try not to think about anything. Just focus on your breathing in and out, in and out.
    - Soon you will find yourself naturally transition into slow, natural, rhythmic breathing.
    - With each breath see yourself breathing in light, healing and peace, and breathing out any darkness, tension and pain you may be retaining.
    - With each breath you become more and more calm, relaxed and focused in the moment.
- Now, relax your entire body beginning with your Head and moving toward your Feet.
    - If you have trouble relaxing, first tense your body, then relax it.
    - Begin by feeling your scalp completely relax, as you visualize light pouring down upon you.
    - Now totally relax your forehead, face and jaw. Let all tension in your forehead go. Relax your cheeks and let your jaw drop just a bit but keeping your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Remember, if your face is relaxed your whole body will be relaxed.
    - A lot of tension can be stored in the neck. Feel the tension evaporate as the warmth descends down your neck from the base of your skull. All muscle tension in your neck melts away, especially as the point where the spine and skull connect, and neck and shoulders connect.
    - Now feel your upper back and chest relax.
    - Feel the light and warmth of that relaxation move from your chest and shoulders loosening all the knots leaving your back and chest totally relaxed.
    - Now the light and warmth move down your arms to your hands and fingers, leaving them totally relaxed and free of any pain.
    - The Light moves down to your lower back and move around to your stomach.
    - Feel the tingling and warmth move down your hips to your thighs, shins and calves. All knots and tension loosen up and are totally relaxed, free of sensitivity, numbness and pain.
    - Feel a warm tingling sense of relaxation move from your ankles to the soles of your feet, and then to the tip of your toes. As the warmth moves forward any tension, numbness and pain in your feet and toes evaporate and blood circulation is increased.

    - All the tension is now completely gone from every part of your body and you are totally and completely relaxed.
- Your mind is relaxed as well. Let any stray thoughts simply pass through your mind without comment or judgment. When you focus on your breathing or a repetitive mantra you can slow and stop any racing thoughts and leave your mind calm and focused.
- As you remain still you become even more deeply relaxed and receptive to messages from the Creative Source within in you.
- Count backward from 10 to 1 and your relaxation and receptiveness to the Creative voice within will deepen and sharpen even more.
    - 10, 9, 8 your body and mind are totally relaxed and receptive.
    - 7, 6, 5, your thoughts are quiet, focused and free of limiting beliefs.
    - 4, 3, 2, 1, you are totally open to the inspiration and creativity that your source would impart to you right now. There is nothing you have to do now, but relax, listen, and absorb the inspiration and healing that flows from your stillness.
- You are in the moment. You see everything with greater clarity. You feel the emotions of the artists you observe, and you are aware of the emotions that arise in you due to your intense focus.
- For a few moments just be in the moment and focus upon your breathing in and out.

APPENDIX D

SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES

Table D.1:Shift in Tempos and Rhythms of the Body—in the Gallery

Categories (Types of Changes)	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Participant A			
Movement	Sitting and walking slowly and looking mindfully. *She didn't pay attention to her movement because of her tiredness.	She was moving. *She didn't pay attention to her movement because she was moving naturally.	Moving in different ways to see angles.
Body Posture	Crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), leaning her body or part of her body on the wall (maeal, مائل), and bending her back forward (monhani, منحني). Putting both hands on the back of her hip and stretching her back. (Signs of tiredness). *She didn't pay attention to her body postures because of her tiredness.	Crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), leaning her body or part of her body on the wall (maeal, مائل), and bending her back forward (monhani, منحني). Putting both hands on the back of her hip and stretching her back. (Signs of tiredness). *She didn't pay attention to her body postures.	Putting her hand above the artwork, crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), bending her back forward (monhani, منحني), leaning her body or part of her body on the wall (maeal, مائل), putting her hands on the back of her hip, and stretching her back slightly backward. *She didn't pay attention to her body postures because she moved naturally.
Breathing	She didn't pay attention to her breathing because of her tiredness.	She didn't pay attention to her breathing, but later she said her breathing was "like a regular tide."	
Participant B			
Movement	Moving naturally and normally. Making a balance of movement and stillness of her body.	Moving but slower. Sometimes, moving quickly.	She didn't want to move. She wanted to be still and relaxed in all her body.
Body Posture	Making her body straight, (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), crossing her arms (metkatef,متكتف), bending her back (monhani, منحني), and squatting (moqarfes, مقرفص).	Rocking/swaying (motaarjeh,متأرجح), bending her back (monhani, منحني), stretching her body (motamadid, متمدد), and putting her hand above the artwork. *She didn't notice her body postures.	Crossing her arms (metkatef, متكتف), making her body straight (qaem/mostaqeem, مستقيم/قائم), bending her back (monhani, منحني), stretching her body (motamadid, متمدد), squatting (moqarfes, مقرفص), crossing her legs, and swinging (motaarjeh, متأرجح).
Breathing	Art didn't affect her breathing because she knew how to relax her body by sitting and breathing.	Noticing her breathing when she was looking at art.	Breathing was slow and steady paced.

Table D.2: Shift in Focus/Intentionality

Categories (Types of Changes in Grip)	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Participant A			
Maximal Grip			
Gestalt Shift in the Grip		She shifted her focus from the artworks to other things in the whole environment, such as different things on the wall, in the dance room, the main lobby, the painting in the hallway, and the other rooms. Also, she noticed things in the Gough gallery, such as the structures that were on the ceiling, the second floor, the railing, and the balcony. She noticed the connection between the place and different things, such as the bench, the railing, and the balcony.	
Imaginative Variations with the Grip	She found different patterns, such as geometry shape, the structure, creek, and waterfall.	She saw human faces. She had more interpretations.	She noticed different patterns, such as faces, lips, teeth, and fingerprints. She had more interpretations.
Participant B			
Maximal Grip	Her intentionality shifted when her body couldn't find the maximal grip. She made a balance between the movement and stillness of her body to see new details when she looked at Artwork 5 (Square Grid) by making her back very straight. She thought to make a connection between herself and the world.	She discovered unseen details and made some interpretations to get the fundamental meaning of this experience by reflecting herself in the world (reversibility).	She didn't make any more interpretations; instead, she focused on the technicality, the materiality, and the complexity of the artworks.
Gestalt Shift in the Grip			
Imaginative Variations with the Grip			She noticed different patterns, such as ultrasound of an empty space and stone from a mountain. She noticed a little before but more today with interpretations.

Table D.3: The Effects of the Guided and Walking Meditations

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Participant A			
The Guided Meditation (Feelings and Thoughts)		She relaxed when her mind was drifting, but later she focused on the present moment. She felt her skin. She felt the same state of quietness.	She couldn't focus gradually. She focused on her skin. She felt the same state of quietness.
The Walking Meditation (Feelings and Thoughts)		She became aware of her body and the environment around her. She didn't like the music of the walking meditation because the sound was not clear.	She became aware of her body and environment around her. She was relaxed and calm. She was satisfied with the meditation audio. The waking meditation helped her to connect the self with the world.
Participant B			
The Guided Meditation (Feelings and Thoughts)		She was relaxing and slowing down the pace of her breathing, but she wanted to move. Her mind focused on breathing. She didn't like this session because it asked her to be still, but she wanted to move.	She couldn't focus, but she relaxed when she focused on her breathing (steady and paced). She wanted to be still and quiet.
The Walking Meditation (Feelings and Thoughts)		Walking meditation was more relaxing because she moved. She wanted to lie down instead of sitting, but she wanted to move as well. The walking meditation helped her to connect the self with the world, the body with the mind, and the object with the subject. The walking meditation and breathing helped her to bracket her internal distractions (thoughts and feelings) and external distractions.	Walking was relaxing. She didn't look at photographs, but she looked around the room.

Table D.4: External and Internal Distractions - In the Gallery

Categories (External and Internal Distractions)	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Participant A			
External Distractions (The Problem)		She broadened her attention to shift away from particular artworks and focus on the whole environment. (Gestalt Shift)	
External Distractions (The Solution)			
Internal Distractions (The Problem)	She was tired and didn't pay attention to her body and senses.	She was tired and didn't pay attention to her body and senses.	She was tired and didn't pay attention to her body and senses.
Internal Distractions (The Solution)			
Participant B			
External Distractions (The Problem)	She was distracted by others (researcher and Participant A).	She was distracted by the camera.	The exhibition included several artworks that she already knew.
External Distractions (The Solution)		She didn't care about the researcher if the researcher took pictures of her. She didn't care if there was a camera. She practiced some meditative activities, such as moving her head on the right and left sides. She was stretching her body, arms, and shoulders. She was making a connection with the world.	She didn't look at all artworks; instead, she engaged in other activities, such as narrowing her attention to specific artworks (the maximal grip), making meditative practices, bracketing her thoughts and feelings. She was making a connection between the self and the world, the subject and the object, and the body and the mind.
Internal Distractions (The Problem)			
Internal Distractions (The Solution)			

Table D.5: External and Internal Distractions - In the Meditation Session (Participant B only*)

Categories (External and Internal Distractions)	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Participant B			
External Distractions (The Problem)		She wasn't comfortable participating in the guided meditation because she felt somebody forced her to be still and because of physical sensations. Her mind was drifting several times.	The voice of the meditation leader. Her mind was drifting. Some words in the meditative script. She didn't like the sensation of letting her fingers move. The environment around her was rich with other artworks (photographs).
External Distractions (The Solution)			She practiced some meditative activities to help her, such as breathing, holding her hands to relax gradually, and focusing on the leader's words if that helps her concentrate. She didn't look at the photographs in the walking meditation, but she looked around the room.
Internal Distractions (The Problem)		She had physical feelings (panic). Her mind was drifting several times.	
Internal Distractions (The Solution)		She practiced some meditative activities, such as focusing on her breathing, the air conditioning sounds, and clock ticking. She practiced walking meditation, and sometimes she closed her eyes.	

*Did not apply to Participant A.

REFERENCES

Albahari, M. (2011). Nirvana and ownerless consciousness. In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 79-113). Oxford University Press.

Anderson, M. L. (2003). Embodied cognition: A field guide. *Artificial Intelligence*, *149*(1), 91-130. Retrieved from https://www.journals.elsevier.com/artificial-intelligence/

Arnold, A., Meggs, S. M., & Greer, A. G. (2014). Empathy and aesthetic experience in the art museum. *International Journal of Education through Art*, *10*(3), 331-347. Retrieved from https://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=121/

Arnold, P. J. (2005). Somaesthetics, education, and the art of dance. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 39*(1), 48-64. Retrieved from http://www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/jae.html

Aspers, P. (2009). Empirical phenomenology: A qualitative research approach (The Cologne Seminars). *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology, 9*(2), 1-12. Retrieved from http://www.ipjp.org/online-issues

Ball, M. (2015). A case study in the relationship of mind to body: Transforming the embodied mind. *Human Studies, 38*(3), 391-407. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/10746

Barry, D., & Meisiek, S. (2010). Seeing more and seeing differently: Sensemaking, mindfulness, and the workarts. *Organization Studies, 31*(11), 1505-1530. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0170840610380802

Beckwith, P. M. (2014). Mindfulness and mandalas: Alternative therapeutic techniques for AOD adolescents. *Capital University's Undergraduate Research Journal*. Retrieved from https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C44&q=Mindfulness+and+mandalas%3A+Alternative+therapeutic+techniques+for+AOD+adolescents.&btnG=

Bevan, M. T. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 24*(1), 136-144. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/qhr

Birmingham Museum of Art. (2014, July 23). 5 benefits of meditation. Retrieved from http://artsbma.org/5-benefits-of-meditation/

Blume, N. (n. d.). *Exploring the mandala: Symbols of the universe*. Retrieved from https://asiasociety.org/exploring-mandala

Bonura, K. B., Spadaro, N. I. M., & Thornton, R. W. (2016). Mindful fitness: Guidelines for prenatal practice. *International Journal of Childbirth Education, 31*(1), 14-17. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/labs/journals/int-j-childbirth-educ/

Brewster, S. A. (2005). The impact of haptic 'touching' technology on cultural applications. In J. Hemsley, V. Cappellini, & G. Stanke (Eds.), Digital applications for cultural heritage institutions (pp. 273-248). Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Brubaker, D. (2003). Merleau-Ponty's eye and mind: Re-thinking the visible. *Journal of Contemporary Thought, 17*, 27-38. Retrieved from https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C44&q=Merleau-Ponty%E2%80%99s+eye+and+mind%3A+Re-thinking+the+visible&btnG=

Burrows, L. (2011). Relational mindfulness in education. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, 24*(4), 1-6. Retrieved from http://www.great-ideas.org/enc.htm

Butzer, B., Bury, D., Telles, S., & Khalsa, S. B. S. (2016). Implementing yoga within the school curriculum: A scientific rationale for improving social-emotional learning and positive student outcomes. *Journal of Children's Services, 11*(1), 3-24. Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journal/jcs

Capel, C. M. (2012). Mindlessness/mindfulness, classroom practices and quality of early childhood education: An auto-ethnographic and intrinsic case research. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 29*(6), 666-680. Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journal/ijqrm

Carman, T. (2008). *Merleau-Ponty*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Carson, C. (2017, September 29). *The history of mandala*. Retrieved from https://classroom.synonym.com/the-history-of-mandala-12079525.html

Carter, M., & Stephenson, J. (2012). The use of multi-sensory environments in schools servicing children with severe disabilities. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 24*(1), 95-109. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/10882

Center for the Future of Museums (2013, April 23). *Art viewing and mindfulness meditation*. Retrieved from http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2013/04/art-viewing-and-mindfulness-meditation.html

Chung, H. Y. (2011). *Engagement with works of art through dialogue: Providing aesthetic experiences in discussion-based museum education programs and implications for museums in Korea* (Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University). Retrieved from http://www.tc.columbia.edu/

Clark, A. (1999). An embodied cognitive science?. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 3*(9), 345-351. Retrieved from https://www.journals.elsevier.com/trends-in-cognitive-sciences/

Clark, A., & Morriss, L. (2015). The use of visual methodologies in social work research over the last decade: A narrative review and some questions for the future. *Qualitative Social Work, 16*(1), 29-43. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/qsw

Clark, R. (2015). Ontology and painting: Merleau-Ponty's eye and mind and its relation to the ocular. *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics, 11*(2), 2-19. Retrieved from http://pjaesthetics.org/index.php/pjaesthetics/article/view/154

Classen, C. (2007). Museum manners: The sensory life of the early museum. *Journal of Social History, 40*(4), 895-914. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/journal/jsocialhistory

Clothier, P. (2012). *Slow looking*. Los Angeles, CA: Toad Rampant Books.

Costantino, T. E. (2005). *Teaching for Aesthetic Experience: A Dual Case Study of the Mediating Influence of Curriculum and Pedagogy on Students' Experiences Visiting an Art Museum* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). Retrieved from http://illinois.edu/

Crippen, M. (2014). Somaesthetics, body phenomenology and Nietzschean themes in Medieval Art. *Pragmatism Today*, 5(2), 40-45. Retrieved from http://www.pragmatismtoday.eu/

Cunliffe, L. (2005). The problematic relationship between knowing how and knowing that in secondary art education. *Oxford Review of Education, 31*(4), 547-556. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/core20

Dahlberg, K. M., & Dahlberg, H. K. (2004). Description vs. interpretation-a new understanding of an old dilemma in human science research. *Nursing Philosophy*, *5*(3), 268-273. Retrieved from http://www.ipons.co.uk/nursing-philosophy---journal.html

Davidson, C. (July 08, 2016). *What is mandala art?* Retrieved from http://www.chakradance.com/blog/what-is-mandala-art

Dellios, R. (2003). Mandala: From sacred origins to sovereign affairs in traditional Southeast Asia. *CEWCS Research Papers.* Paper 8. Retrieved from http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cewcs_papers/8

Descartes, R. (2006). *Meditations, objections, and replies*. In R. Ariew & D. Cress (Eds. & Trans.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.

Dortins, E. (2002). Reflections on phenomenographic process: Interview, transcription and analysis. *Quality Conversations: Research and Development in Higher Education, 25,* 207-213. Retrieved from http://www.herdsa.org.au/research-and-development-higher-education-vol-25

Dowling, M. (2007). From Husserl to van Manen: A review of different phenomenological approaches. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *44*(1), 131-142. Retrieved from https://www.journals.elsevier.com/international-journal-of-nursing-studies/

Dreyfus, G. (2011). Self and subjectivity: A middle way approach. In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 114-156). Oxford University Press.

Duncum, P. (1999). A case for an art education of everyday aesthetic experiences. *Studies in Art Education, 40*(4), 295-311. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/studies-in-art-education

Duncum, P. (2012). An eye does not make an I: Expanding the sensorium. *Studies in Art Education, 53*(3), 182-193. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/studies-in-art-education

Duncun, B. M. (2014). *Digital detox, mindfulness, and art museum* (Master's thesis, Drexel University). Retrieved from https://idea.libarary.drexel.edu/

Dustin, C., & Ziegler, J. (2005). *Practicing mortality: Art, philosophy, and contemplative seeing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Eddles-Hirsch, K. (2015). Phenomenology and educational research. *International Journal of Advanced Research, 3*(8), 251-260. Retrieved from http://www.journalijar.com/

Ellsworth, E. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy.* New York: Taylor & Francis.

Ergas, O. (2011). Spirituality as a pragmatic science: Toward the establishment of a holistic educational rationale. *Religion & Education*, *38*(2), 165-178. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urel20

Ergas, O. (2012). Overcoming the philosophy/life, body/mind rift: Demonstrating yoga as embodied-lived-philosophical-practice. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 46*(1), 74-86. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rept20/current

Ergas, O. (2013). Descartes in a 'headstand': Introducing 'body-oriented pedagogy'. Paideusis, 21(1), 4-12. Retrieved from https://www.calj-acrs.ca/journal/paideusis-journal-canadian-philosophy-education-society

Ergas, O. (2014a). Mindfulness in education at the intersection of science, religion, and healing. *Critical Studies in Education*, *55*(1), 58-72. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcse20

Ergas, O. (2014b). Two mind-altering curriculums: Contemplation, mindfulness, and the educational question whether "to think or not to think?". *Journal of Transformative Education*. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jtd

Ergas, O. (2015a). Educating the wandering mind: Pedagogical mechanisms of mindfulness for a curricular blind spot. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1-22. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jtd

Ergas, O. (2015b). The deeper teachings of mindfulness-based 'interventions' as a reconstruction of 'education'. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 49*(2), 203-220. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-9752

Ergas, O. (2016). Attention please: Positioning attention at the center of curriculum and pedagogy. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 31*(2), 66-81. Retrieved from http://journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct

Estep, M. S. (2012). *Contemplative practices in the museum setting* (Doctoral dissertation, The Corcoran College of Art + Design). Retrieved from https://corcoran.gwu.edu/

Fasching, W. (2011). 'I am of the nature of seeing': Phenomenological reflections on the Indian notion of witness-consciousness. In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 193-216). Oxford University Press.

Fendler, L. (2012). The educational problems of aesthetic taste. *Pedocs*. Retrieved from http://www.pedocs.de/index.php?la=en

Ferreira, K. (2015, July 31). 320 hours: Slow looking & visitor engagement with El Greco. *Art Museum Teaching*. Retrieved from https://artmuseumteaching.com/2015/07/31/320-hours-slow-looking-visitor-engagement-with-el-greco/

Flannery, M. (1978). The significance of scribbling. *National Art Education Association, 31*(3), 12-17. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/

Flannery, M. (1981). The phenomenal body and art. *National Art Education Association, 34*(5), 26-28. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/

Fliegel, S. N. (2012). *A Higher Contemplation: Sacred Meaning in the Christian Art of the Middle Ages*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press.

Foss, S. K. & Waters, W. (2016). *Destination dissertation: A traveler's guide to a done dissertation*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Friesen, N., Henriksson, C., & Saevi, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Hermeneutic phenomenology in education: Method and practice.* Boston: Sense Publishers.

Gallagher, S. (2005). *How the body shapes the mind*. New York: Oxford.

Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D. (2008). *The phenomenological mind: An introduction to philosophy of mind and cognitive science*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Gambis, M. (2015, August 25). Why making art is the new meditation. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/08/25/why-making-art-is-the-new-meditation/?utm_term=.644add73c503

Ganeri, J. (2011). Subjectivity, selfhood and the use of the word 'I.' In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 176-192). Oxford University Press.

Garcia, J. A., & Lewis, T. E. (2014). Getting a grip on the classroom: from psychological to phenomenological curriculum development in teacher education programs. *Curriculum Inquiry, 44*(2), 141-168. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-873X

Garland, S. N., Carlson, L. E., Cook, S., Lansdell, L., & Speca, M. (2007). A non-randomized comparison of mindfulness-based stress reduction and healing arts programs for

facilitating post-traumatic growth and spirituality in cancer outpatients. *Supportive Care in Cancer, 15*(8), 949-961. Retrieved from http://www.springer.com/medicine/oncology/journal/520

Garoian, C. R. (2001). Performing the museum. *Studies in Art Education, 42*(3), 234-248. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/studies-in-art-education

Garza, G. (2011). Varieties of phenomenological research at the University of Dallas: An emerging typology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *4*(4), 313-342.

Gershon, W. S. (2011) Introduction: Towards a sensual curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 27*(2), 1-16. Retrieved from http://journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct

Giorgi, A. (2006). Difficulties encountered in the application of the phenomenological method in the social sciences. *Análise Psicológica*, *24*(3), 353-361.

Girel, M. (2015). Perfectionism in practice: Shusterman's place in recent pragmatism. *Contemporary Pragmatism, 12*(1), 156-179. Retrieved from http://www.brill.com/products/journal/contemporary-pragmatism

Gonzalez De leon, M. (2017, January 17). *Memento mori: Remember that you too will die*. Retrieved from http://www.faena.com/aleph/articles/memento-mori-remember-that-you-too-will-die/

Gradle, S. A. (2011). A university course in mindful viewing: Understanding art and self through contemplative experience. *International Journal of Education through Art, 7*(2), 137-151. Retrieved from https://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=121/

Granger, D. A. (2010) Somaesthetics and racism: Toward an embodied pedagogy of difference. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 44*(3), 69-81. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/journal/jaesteduc

Gray, C. & Malins, J. (2004). Planning the journey: Introduction to research in art and design. In *Visualizing research*: A guide to the research process in art and design (pp. 9-34). Burlington, VT: Ashgate

Greene, M. (1977). Imagination and aesthetic literacy. *National Art Education Association, 30*(6), 14-20. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/publisher/naea

Grey, M. (2001). Encountering the mandala: The mental and political architectures of dependency. *Culture Mandala: The Bulletin of the centre for East-West cultural and economic studies*, *4*(2), 1. Retrieved from http://epublications.bond.edu.au/cm/vol4/iss2/1/

Guentchev, D. (2010). The role of painting in the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal, 2*(2). Retrieved from http://asage.org/index.php/ASAGE/article/view/49

Harris, R. (2009). Mindfulness without meditation. *Healthcare Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal*, *9*(4), 21-24. Retrieved from https://www.actmindfully.com.au/upimages/Mindfulness_without_meditation_--_Russ_Harris_--_HCPJ_Oct_09.pdf

Hartjen, L. F. (2012). Art and transformation: Embodied action in a first-grade art class. *Art Education, 65*(6), 12-17. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/art-education-journal

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. In J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (Trans.). New York, NY: Harper-Collins Publishers.

Heyn, A. (2015). Slow looking and 5 other simple activities to enhance your students' ability to analyze art. *The Art of Education*. Retrieved from https://www.theartofed.com/2015/03/02/slow-looking-and-5-other-simple-activities-to-enhance-your-students-ability-to-analyze-art/

Høffding, S., & Martiny, K. (2015). Framing a phenomenological interview: what, why and how. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *15*(4), 539-564. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/11097

Hornecker, E. (2008). "I don't understand it either, but it is cool" - visitor interactions with a multi-touch table in a museum. IEEE International Workshop on *Horizontal Interactive Human Computer Systems (TABLETOP),*113-120. Retrieved from http://www.ieee.org/conferences_events/conferences/conferencedetails/index.html?Conf_ID=13861

Hornich-Lisciandro, T. (2013). Mindfulness in education. *The Education Digest, 79*(2), 66-68. Retrieved from https://www.eddigest.com/

Horst, S. (2005). Phenomenology and psychophysics. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *4*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/11097

Howard, E. B. (2017). *Icon meditation: A brief guide*. Retrieved from http://spiritualityshoppe.org/icon-meditation-brief-guide/

Hubard, O. M. (2007). Complete engagement: Embodied response in art museum education. *Art Education, 60*(6), 46-56. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/art-education-journal

Hughes, K., & Moscardo, G. (2017). Connecting with new audiences: Exploring the impact of mobile communication devices on the experiences of young adults in museums. *Visitor Studies*, *20*(1), 33-55. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uvst20

Hung, W. S. (2013). No recipe for the visible": The theory of linear perspective in Merleau-Ponty's "eye and mind. *Philosophy Today*, *57*(3), 295-302. Retrieved from https://www.pdcnet.org/pdc/bvdb.nsf/purchase?openform&fp=philtoday&id=philtoday_2013_0057_0003_0295_0302

Jasani, S. K. & Saks, N. S. (2013, May 3). Utilizing visual art to enhance the clinical observation skills of medical students. *Medical Teacher, 35*(7), 1327-1331. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23641917

Jasinski, I., & Lewis, T. E. (2015). The educational community as in-tentional community. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *35*(4), 371-383. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/11217

Jeffers, C. S. (2009). On Empathy: The mirror neuron system and art education. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 10*(15), 1-17. Retrieved from http://www.ijea.org/articles.html

Johnson, G. A. (1993). Ontology and painting: "Eye and mind." In G. A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader* (pp. 35-55). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Joiner, C. (2015, April 20). *Mindfulness meditation or prayer?* Retrieved from http://orthodoxwayoflife.blogspot.com/2015/04/mindfulness-meditation-or-prayer.html

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1982). An outpatient program in behavioral medicine chronic pain patients based on the practice of mindfulness meditation: Theoretical considerations and preliminary results. *General Hospital Psychiatry, 4*(1), 33-47. Retrieved from https://www.journals.elsevier.com/general-hospital-psychiatry

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). Where you go there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life. *PhilosophersNotes*. Retrieved from https://www.optimize.me/philosophersnotes/

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2011). Some reflections on the origins of MBSR, skillful means, and the trouble with maps. *Contemporary Buddhism, 12*(01), 281-306. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcbh20

Kalin, N. M., & Barney, D. T. (2014). Hunting for monsters: Visual arts curriculum as agonistic inquiry. *International Journal of Art & Design Education, 33*(1), 19-31. Retrieved from http://www.nsead.org/publications/ijade.aspx

Kalmanowitz, D., & Ho, R. T. (2016). Out of our mind. Art therapy and mindfulness with refugees, political violence and trauma. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 49*, 57-65. Retrieved from https://www.journals.elsevier.com/the-arts-in-psychotherapy/

Kan, K. H. (2011). Playful mindfulness: how Singapore adolescent students embody meaning with school art. *Studies in Art Education, 52*(2), 155-170. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/studies-in-art-education

Kelly, B. D. (2012). Contemplative traditions and meditation. In L. J. Miller, (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of psychology and spirituality* (pp. 307-325). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kimball, V. (2003). *Dormition, meditation of icon: A reflection of the feast of the assumption*. Retrieved from https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/d/dormition-meditation-of-icon.php

Kohler, M. C. (2012). *Creating space: Mindfulness and art-making*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from https://corcoran.gwu.edu/. (UMI number 1508684)

Kozlowski, E. A. (2013). Can craft save the museum? Museums, materiality and the human sensory experience. *Arizona State University.* Retrieved from https://www.asu.edu/

Krueger, J. W. (2011). The who and the how of experience. In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 27-55). Oxford University Press.

Laban, R. (2014) Eurhythmy and kakorhythmy in art and education. *Body & Society*, *20*(3&4), 75-78. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/bod

Lankford, E. L. (1984). A phenomenological methodology for art criticism. *Studies in Art Education, 25*(3), 151-158. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/studies-in-art-education

LaPoint, S. & King, M. (2016). The dynamic social agency of the Kālacakra Sand Mandala. *Undergraduate Research Journal*. (pp. 41-47). Retrieved from https://www.sccur.org/sccur/fall_2016_conference/oral_talks/87/

Lester, S. (1999). An introduction to phenomenological research. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net

Lewis, T. E. (2013). Studied perception and a phenomenology of bodily gesturality. *Philosophy of Education,* 341-349. Retrieved from https://www.philosophyofeducation.org/

Lewis, T. E. (2015). "Move around! There is something to see here": The biopolitics of the perceptual pedagogy of the arts. *Studies in Art Education*, *57*(1), 53-62. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/research/studies-in-art-education

Lewis, T. E. (2016). The delicate taste for democracy: Rethinking the radical political possibilities of taste in visual culture art education. *Knowledge Cultures*, *4*(5), 81-94. Retrieved from https://www.addletonacademicpublishers.com/knowledge-cultures

Low, D. B. (2000). *Merleau-Ponty's last vision: A proposal for the completion of the visible and the invisible*. Northwestern University Press.

Ludwig, D. S., & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2008). Mindfulness in medicine. *Jama*, *300*(11), 1350-1352. Retrieved from http://jamanetwork.com/

Maattanen, P. (2010). Shusterman on somatic experience. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education, 9*(1), 55-66. Retrieved from http://act.maydaygroup.org/

Madenfort, D. (1973). Educating for the immediately sensuous as unified whole. *National Art Education Association, 26*(7), 6-11. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/

Madenfort, W. J. (1972). Aesthetic education: An education for the immediacy of sensuous experience. *National Art Education Association, 25*(5), 10-14. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/

Mangione, G. (2016). Making sense of things: Constructing aesthetic experience in museum gardens and galleries. *Museum & Society*, 14(1), 33-51.

Martin, C., & Ergas, O. (2016). Mindfulness, sport and the body: the justification of physical education revisited. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, *10*(2), 161-174. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rsep20/current

Mazis, G. A. (2012). Merleau-Ponty's artist of depth: Exploring "eye and mind" and the works of art chosen by Merleau-Ponty as preface. *PhaenEx, 7*(1), 244-274. Retrieved from https://hrgpapers.uwindsor.ca/ojs/leddy/index.php/HRG

McArthur, M. (2002). *Reading Buddhist art: An illustrated guide to Buddhist signs and symbols*. London: Thames & Hudson.

McKay, B., & McKay, K. (2012, October 29). *Memento mori: Art to help you meditate on death and become a better man*. Retrieved from https://www.artofmanliness.com/2012/10/29/memento-mori-art/

Meier, B. P., Schnall, S., Schwarz, N., & Bargh, J. A. (2012). Embodiment in social psychology. *Topics in Cognitive Science, 4*(4), 705-716. Retrieved from http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-TOP3.html

Mercer, M. (2017, October 21). Marsha Mercer column: A museum for 'slow looking' reopens in nation's capital. *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Retrieved from http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/marsha-mercer/marsha-mercer-column-a-museum-for-slow-looking-reopens-in/article

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The visible and the invisible.* New York, NY: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1969) The "sensation" as a unit of experience. *Perception: selected readings in science and phenomenology. New York: Quadrangle.*

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1993). Eye and mind. In G. A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader* (pp. 121-149) Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004). *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: The world of perception*. London: Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of perception*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Mertens. D. M. (2010). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Miller, W. B. (2015). Like an elephant pricked by a thorn: Buddhist meditation instructions as a door to deep listening. *Buddhist-Christian Studies, 35*(1), 15-20. Retrieved from http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/t3-buddhist-christian-studies.aspx

Montgomery-Whicher, R. (1997). *Drawing from observation: A phenomenological inquiry* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta). Retrieved from https://www.ualberta.ca/

Morse, T. (April 1, 2011). Slow down, you look too fast. *Artnews*. Retrieved from http://www.artnews.com/2011/04/01/slow-down-you-look-too-fast/

Murawski, M. (2014, April 29). Open thinking: Visual thinking strategies (vts) & museums. *Art Museum Teaching*. Retrieved from https://artmuseumteaching.com/2014/04/29/openthink-visual-thinking-strategies-vts-museums/

Naumova, A. (2015). "Touching" the past: Investigating lived experiences of heritage in living history museums. *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum, 7*(3), 1-8. Retrieved from http://ijz.cgpublisher.com/

Noble, T. A. (2017, September 12). Memento mori: How a skull on your desk will change your life. *Aleteia*. Retrieved from https://aleteia.org/2017/09/12/memento-mori-how-a-skull-on-your-desk-will-change-your-life/

Nordlund, S. M., (2016). *Sensory immersion: Multisensory resources for walk-in visitors with visual impairments or blindness at an art museum* (Master's thesis, University of Texas at Austin). Retrieved from https://www.utexas.edu/

Orthodox Church of Estonia. (n. d.). *Icons*. Retrieved from http://www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/iconography/whatisaniconGB.htm

Ott, M. J. (2004). Mindfulness meditation: A path of transformation & healing. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services, 42*(7), 22-29. Retrieved from https://www.healio.com/psychiatry/journals/jpn

Padilla-Díaz, M. (2015). Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science. *International Journal of Educational Excellence, 1*(2), 101-110. Retrieved from http://road.issn.org/issn/2373-5929-international-journal-of-educational-excellence#.WdEwV2hSxPY

Paradis, D. L. (2017). *Icon of Our Lady of La Salette: A meditation*. Retrieved from https://www.lasalette.org/index.php/images-a-downloads/la-salette-images/category/287-19571960

Parvizian, S. (2016). Generosity, the Cogito, and the fourth meditation. *Res Philosophica, 93*(1), 219-243. Retrieved from http://www.resphilosophica.org/

Patterson, J. (2015). Employing mindfulness via art in education. *International Journal of Education through Art*, *11*(2), 185-192. Retrieved from https://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=121/

Philosophy for Life and Other Dangerous Situations. (2009, May 12). *The memento mori.* Retrieved from www.philosophyforlife.org/the-memento-mori

Power, N. (2009). *To touch or not to touch. Male primary school teachers' experiences of touch: a hermeneutic phenomenological study* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology). Retrieved from https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/auckland-university-technology-aut

Proweller, W. (1973). The role of the body in early artistic expression. *National Art Education Association, 26*(3), 11-15. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/

Puff, R. (2013, July 7). An overview of meditation: Its origins and traditions. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/meditation-modern-life/201307/overview-meditation-its-origins-and-traditions?amp

Quinn, C. (2009). Perception and painting in Merleau-Ponty's thought. *Perspectives: International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy*, *2*(1), 9-30. Retrieved from http://www.ucd.ie/philosophy/perspectives/resources/Carolyne_Quinn.pdf

Reid, D. (2009). Capturing presence moments: The art of mindful practice in occupational therapy. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *76*(3), 180-188. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/cjo

Rezac, M. (2017, October 31). *Memento mori – How religious orders remember death*. Retrieved from https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2017/10/31/memento-mori-religious-orders-%20remember-death

Roberts, J. L. (2013). The power of patience. *Harvard Magazine*. Retrieved from http://harvardmagazine.com/2013/11/the-power-of-patience

Roberts, R. C. (2013). Questions of museum essence: Being, being with, and finding connection in conversation. *Museums & Social Issues*, *8*(1-2), 89-101. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ymsi20

Rochester Arts in Mission. (2016, December 2). *The beauty of holiness – Meditations on icons for advent*. Retrieved from http://www.rochesteraim.com/the-beauty-of-holiness-meditations-on-icons-for-advent/

Rohloff, R. P. (2008). *Life excavation through the imaginarium: An emancipatory model of arts-based inquiry (*Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). Retrieved from http://illinois.edu/

Rohr, R. (2016, September 13). Take your place at the table. *Center for Action and Contemplation.* Retrieved from https://cac.org/take-place-table-2016-09-13/

Roosevelt, A. (n. d.). *Creating a Christian meditation altar*. Retrieved from https://christaudio.com/blogs/christian-meditation/creating-a-christian-meditation-altar

Rosenbloom, S. (2014, October 9). The art of slowing down in a museum. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/12/travel/the-art-of-slowing-down-in-a-museum.html?mcubz=3

Schlosser, Z. (2014, November 11). A simple guide to the complex world of meditation. *Sonima*. Retrieved from http://www.sonima.com/meditation/guide-to-meditation/

Scully, S. (2017). Meditations on pleasure: John Ruskin and the value of art in the classroom. *Teaching Artist Journal*, *15*(2), 64-67. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15411796.2017.1321544

Shabout, N. M. (2007). *Modern Arab art: Formation of Arab aesthetics*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida

Shauck, R. B. (2017). *Sources of artistic inspiration among plein air landscape painters* (Doctoral dissertation, Boston University). Retrieved from http://www.bu.edu/

Shimamura, P. (2014, November 22). The slow art movement: It's more than meets the eye. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-the-brain-the-beholder/201411/the-slow-art-movement-its-more-meets-the-eye

Shusterman, R. (1992). *Pragmatist aesthetics: Living beauty, rethinking art*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Shusterman, R. (1999). Somaesthetics: A disciplinary proposal. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, *57*(3), 299-313. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/journal/jaestartcrit

Shusterman, R. (2000). *Performing live: Aesthetic alternatives for the ends of art*. London: Cornell University.

Shusterman, R. (2006). Thinking through the body, educating for the humanities: A plea for somaesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, *40*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/235

Shusterman, R. (2008). *Body consciousness: A philosophy of mindfulness and somaesthetics*. New York: Cambridge University.

Shusterman, R. (2011). Somatic style. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, *69*(2), 147-159. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/journal/jaestartcrit

Shusterman, R. (2012). *Thinking through the body: Essays in somaesthetics*. New York: Cambridge University.

Shusterman, R. (2013). Body and the arts: The need for somaesthetics. *Diogenes*, *59*(1-2), 7-20. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/dio

Shusterman, R. (2015). Transactional experiential inquiry: From pragmatism to somaesthetics. *Contemporary Pragmatism, 12*(1), 180-195. Retrieved from http://www.brill.com/products/journal/contemporary-pragmatism

Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2014). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies, and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity*, *48*(3), 1291-1303. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11135-013-9835-3

Soon, S. (2012). Spatio-temporal currency: The kalachakra sand mandala as cultural object in performance. *Modern Art Asia*. 12,1-28.

Springgay, S. (2005). Thinking through bodies: Bodied encounters and the process of meaning making in an e-mail generated art project. *National Art Education Association, 47*(1), 34-50. Retrieved from https://www.arteducators.org/

Springgay, S. (2008). *Body knowledge and curriculum: Pedagogies of touch in youth and visual culture.* New York: Peter Lang.

Stelter, R. (2010). Experience-based, body-anchored qualitative research interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 20*(6), 859-867. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/qhr

Streb, J. H. (1984). Thoughts on phenomenology, education, and art. *Studies in Art Education, 25*(3), 159-166. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/journal/studarteduc

Sturken, M. (2015). The objects that lived: The 9/11 museum and material transformation. *Memory Studies, 9(*1), 13-26. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/mss

The Center for the Contemplative Mind in Society. (n. d.). *Beholding*. Retrieved from http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree/beholding

Thompson, E. (2011). Self-no-self? Memory and reflective awareness. In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 157-175). Oxford University Press.

Thurman, R. A. (2006). Meditation and education: India, Tibet, and modern America. *Teachers College Record*, *108*(9), 1765-1774.

Toadvine, T. A. (1997). The art of doubting: Merleau-Ponty and Cézanne. *Philosophy Today*, *41*(4), 545-553. Retrieved from https://www.pdcnet.org/philtoday/content/philtoday_1997_0041_0004_0545_0553

Trop, K. (2014, February 7). Rippling recognitions. *Slow Art Day*. http://www.slowartday.com/tag/slow-looking-exercise/

Turabian, K. L. (2013). *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.

Uhrmacher, P. B. (2009). Toward a theory of aesthetic learning experiences. *Curriculum Inquiry, 39*(5), 613-636. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net

Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Van de Weijer-Bergsma, E., Formsma, A. R., de Bruin, E. I., & Bögels, S. M. (2012). The effectiveness of mindfulness training on behavioral problems and attentional functioning in adolescents with ADHD. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 21*(5), 775-787. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/10826

Van Gordon, W., Shonin, E., & Garcia-Campayo, J. (2017). The mandala of the present moment. *Mindfulness, 8*(6), 1720-1722.

Vanheusen, I. (2016). Icon of sacrifice. The Art of Living Well. Retrieved from https://ianvanheusen.com/episode-4-my-idea-behind-the-art-of-living-well/

Van Manen, M. (2014). Human science methods: Empirical and reflective activities. In J. Morse (Eds.), *Phenomenology of practice (311-341).* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Vlieghe, J., Simons, M., & Masschelein, J. (2010). The educational meaning of communal laughter: On the experience of corporeal democracy. *Educational Theory, 60*(6), 719-734. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1741-5446

Vlieghe, J. (2013a). Beyond biopolitics. A biopedagogical perspective on corporeal experience. *Interchange, 44*(3-4), 257-273. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/10780

Vlieghe, J. (2013b). Physical education as 'means without ends': Towards a new concept of physical education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *45*(9), 934-948. Retrieved from https://pesa.org.au/

Vlieghe, J. (2014a). Corporeality, equality, and education: A biopedagogical perspective. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 36*(4), 320-339. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gred20

Vlieghe, J. (2014b). On the other side of meaning. Merleau-Ponty and agamben on the body and education. Ediciones University de Salamanca, *26*(1), 21. Retrieved from http://www0.usal.es/webusal/en

Wahba, Z. (1993, January). *Icons: Their history and spiritual significance.* Retrieved from http://www.coptic.net/articles/copticicons.txt

Walton, P. (2012). Beyond talk and text: An expressive visual arts method for social work education. *Social Work Education, 31*(6), 724-741. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02615479.2012.695934

Wecker, M. (2017, September 14). 7 ways of looking at the memento moro, art history's spookiest – and most misunderstood – genre. *artnet news*. Retrieved from https://news.artnet.com/art-world/guide-memento-mori-art-historians-1076897/amp-page

Williams, G. (2011). Deeper mindfulness for better work performance. *Civil Engineering/Siviele Ingenieurswese*, *19*(1). Retrieved from http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=15017&tip=sid&clean=0

Wood, E., & Latham, K. (2011). The thickness of things: Exploring the curriculum of museums through phenomenological touch. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 27*(2), 51-65. Retrieved from http://journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct

Wrathall, M. (2010). The phenomenological relevance of art. In J. D. Parry (Ed.), *Art and phenomenology* (pp. 9-30). New York, NY: Routledge.

Zahavi, D. (2004). Introduction: Subjectivity in the center or back to basics. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *3*, 229-234. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/11097

Zahavi, D. (2005). *Subjectivity and selfhood: Investigating the first-person perspective.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Zahavi, D. (2011). The experiential self: Objections and clarifications. In M. Siderits, E. Thompson, & D. Zahavi (Eds.), *Self, no self?* (pp. 56-78). Oxford University Press.

Zylowska, L., Ackerman, D. L., Yang, M. H., Futrell, J. L., Horton, N. L., Hale, T. S., Pataki, C., & Smalley, S. L. (2008). Mindfulness meditation training in adults and adolescents with ADHD: a feasibility study. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, *11*(6), 737-746. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jad