

INTRODUCTION

Am I more than the sum of my experiences? There is time involved.
It may crystallize into shapes or sounds.

MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ

This book is dedicated to the aims of art: why we make it and why we share it. In our previous book, *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, we provided a sampling of Buddhist perspectives in the art of our era. For this volume we have broadened our field of focus to analyze the nature of the art experience itself—its creation, its cultivation, its effects—bringing related cultural influences such as American pragmatism and analytical tools from theory to neuroscience into the mix. But this is not to leave the lessons of Buddhism behind. The Buddha may have been the world's first performance artist, taking on “roles intuitively chosen to convey an experience that is more than the sum of the words that can be said about it,” as Kay Larson wrote in *Buddha Mind*.¹ The historical Buddha seems to have been precisely the kind of teacher—or, more accurately, un-teacher—promoted by thinkers ranging from Socrates to Elizabeth Palmer Peabody to Jacques Rancière.²

Our title, *Learning Mind*, implies a recognition that the art process is transformational—whether one is making or experiencing art. Our subtitle, *Experience into Art*, is an obvious play on *Art as Experience*, the title of the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey's influential book, published in 1934. According to writer Louis Menand, pragmatism—the most significant American philosophical movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—“is about how we think, not what we think.”³ Its three primary exponents—the logician Charles S. Peirce, the psychologist William James, and Dewey—were all impressed by the experiential theory of the Buddha,⁴ traces of which are apparent in pragmatism's basic tenants. These core beliefs are that (1) meaning and belief are fallible (fallibilism), liable to error

The epigraph is from Magdalena Abakanowicz, *Fate and Art* (Skira: Milan, 2008), 194.

1. Kay Larson, “Shaping the Unbounded: One Life, One Art,” in *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, ed. Jacquelynn Baas and Mary Jane Jacob (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 64.

2. Elizabeth Peabody, *Record of a School* (Boston: J. Munroe, 1835); Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

3. Louis Menand, *Pragmatism: A Reader* (New York: Vintage, 1997), xxvi.

4. Peirce and James were heirs to a Transcendental intellectual milieu informed by the first translation into English from a Buddhist sutra—the Lotus Sutra—published in *The Dial* in 1844 by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Pedagogy of Buddhism,” in *Touching Feeling: Affect*,

Pedagogy, Performativity (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 153–81; Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992), 54–69 (he cites Thoreau as translator of the Lotus Sutra); and Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 200–202. On Dewey and Buddhism, see Jacquelynn Baas, *Smile of the Buddha: Eastern Philosophy and Western Art from Monet to Today* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 58–59.

5. A pithy summary of pragmatism can be found in chapter 3 of Bruce A. Kimball, *The Condition of American Liberal Education: Pragmatism and a Changing Tradition* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995), 17–27.

6. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch, 1934), 14–15.

7. Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 361.

8. First edition published from 1889 to 1891 by the Century Company of New York, available at <http://www.leoyan.com/century-dictionary.com/index.html>.

9. Philip W. Jackson, *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 5–6.

and thus subject to change; (2) inquiry is essentially experimental; (3) meaning and belief depend on the context of the community in which they are formed; (4) experience is the interaction of an organism with its environment; (5) all thinking is resolving doubts (Peirce) or solving problems (Dewey); and (6) all judgments of “truth” are fundamentally judgments of value.⁵

Dewey managed to incorporate all six of these points into his description of the artistic process:

*Life grows when a temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of the energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives. . . . Equilibrium comes about not mechanically and inertly but out of, and because of, tension. . . . Order is not imposed from without but is made out of the relations of harmonious interactions that energies bear to one another. . . . Emotion is the conscious sign of a break, actual or impending. The discord is the occasion that induces reflection. Desire for restoration of the union converts mere emotion into interest in objects as conditions of realization of harmony. With the realization, material of reflection is incorporated into objects as their meaning.*⁶

The artistic process, like all human development, is an unbroken sequence of crises and resolutions. It is similar to walking: to move forward you push yourself to fall, then catch yourself. *You* catch yourself—“order is not imposed from without.” It’s a balancing act, this “temporary falling out” in order to “transition to” somewhere else; to maintain it, there has to be a relational exchange of energy.

A livelier example is Fred Astaire’s dancing—he *needs* the pull of gravity and the firm push-back of wall and chair to achieve those marvelous moments of stasis. So with the mind: distress wants resolution; to achieve it, the mind casts about for a tool or method. Then some object, some metaphor, some nugget of information offers what feels like a solution. We’re talking intuition here—we “know” the answer before we can depict or describe what it is. In this realm, Dewey concluded, “ideas and beliefs are the same as hands: instruments for coping.”⁷

Dewey uses the word “realization” in the last line of his description in the sense of “making real,” making experience available to the senses. It is the basis for the word “aesthetic,” which Charles S. Peirce’s entry for *The Century Dictionary* says comes from a Greek word meaning “perceptible by the senses.”⁸ The “consummation” (Dewey’s term) of this experiential process is inherently pleasurable, and both subject and object emerge from it changed—the subject has experienced a transformation of the self, while the object has acquired new meaning.⁹ Although

Dewey has not received adequate credit, his theories have returned in the guise of so-called “relational aesthetics.”¹⁰ We prefer to snare a prefix from Marcel Duchamp and call the process “infra-relational”—*within* relational, super-relational, completely married. (“I want to grasp things with the mind the way the penis is grasped by the vagina,” Duchamp said.¹¹)

This process of experience into art is what unites the essays gathered under our first heading, “On the Being of Being an Artist.” Philosopher Arthur C. Danto considers the German artist Jörg Immendorff, who, like other young artists of the 1960s and 1970s, “was less interested in making something new in art than in making a new world, for which art was to be a means.” Danto addresses the meaning and purpose of being an artist today, in a world where boundaries have disappeared, where (thanks to Duchamp and Andy Warhol) the difference between ordinary objects and art objects is not obvious, and “an immense number of young people want, like Immendorf, . . . to become artists.” What exactly is an artist now? A “soft guerrilla,” is Danto’s answer, someone who can act, through art, on consciousness: “By changing consciousness, reality may be changed from within.”

In lively, almost comedic questions posed to the art student, critic Jerry Saltz asks whether art can change the world—can it stop the spread of AIDS, for example, or change a government? Art *does* change the world, he concludes, “incrementally and by osmosis, and it does it in ways that we can’t quite know.” For Saltz, art is both a way of seeing the world and what is seen; it is an “energy source that helps to make change possible.” And he instructs artists: “the number one thing is work. You have to work in times of doubt, in good times, bad times—work.”

Museum director and curator Marcia Tucker takes an autobiographical approach in advising young artists on the necessity of change, reinvention, and fear in creating both their work and their lives. Art, she says, “can be a catalyst for change. It can change the way you see and therefore how you think, and then possibly the way you act.” The most valuable thing she has learned from the artists with whom she has worked, she insists, “is that confusion, disorder, mistakes, and failure—all the things that we encounter when we try something new—are essential to the creative process.”

Psychiatrist Mark Epstein directly refers to the teachings of the Buddha in his autobiographical essay. “Artists,” he says, “like psychoanalysts and Zen teachers, are people who can fail and fail and go on.” Epstein cites Sigmund Freud, who cautioned therapists that the most important method is to “suspend judgment and give

10. First expounded by Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1998); English transl. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002).

11. From an interview with Lawrence Steefel, quoted in his 1960 Princeton doctoral dissertation, published as *The Position of Duchamp’s Glass in the Development of His Art* (New York: Garland, 1977), 312. Duchamp’s term was “infra-*mince*” (infra-thin): “When the tobacco smoke also carries the scent of the mouth that exhales it, the two odors marry through infra-thin” (*View: Parade of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Charles Henri Ford [New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 1991], 118; translation ours).

impartial attention to everything there is to observe . . . simply listen and do not bother about keeping anything in mind.” Epstein compares this advice with John Cage’s warning to musicians that “to refuse sounds that are not musical [is to] cut yourself off from a good deal of experience.” He credits Cage’s teacher, Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki, with helping to make this perspective available to the art world: “The people who heard him most easily were artists. The art that they made, and the artists they in turn have inspired, continue to carry his message, asking us to question ourselves instead of settling into complacency, to open ourselves instead of closing down around what we already know, and to embarrass ourselves instead of worrying what other people think.” Like Tucker, Epstein suggests that this freedom is at the core of the artistic process.

In “Our Barefoot Practice,” artist and educator Ernesto Pujol shares a personal statement, telling of his ongoing journey as an artist. In his view, the path taken to become an artist must be a transformational one. Moreover, he asks us to contemplate, “What should American art education look like during this time of conflict, during this time of war?” He suggests that to cultivate an art practice today requires us to “rescue the definition of art from a shallow environment of entertainment, a distraction from reality and the deeper self.” He asks nothing less than that we “reclaim art education as a profound, subtle, but complex meditation on our past, our present, and our possible future: on where we come from, who we are, and what we are becoming.” It is worth risking art-world dismissal, Pujol avers, for the rewards of being “truly engaged in an ethical, compassionate art practice that is transparent, generous, and kind.”

In her essay, “Making Not Knowing,” artist Ann Hamilton addresses trusting intuition and frames the act of making in terms of the act of speaking. “How can words be acts of making?” Hamilton asks, and describes various art acts she devised to explore this territory. She concludes that one thing art and speaking have in common is that “one doesn’t arrive—in words or in art—by necessarily knowing where one is going . . . you work from what you know to what you don’t know.” Thus the inventive act of speaking suggests that a life of making is an everyday practice—a practice of questions more than of answers.

In the remarkable text “Fate and Art,” sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz demonstrates how powerful personal experience enters art and is even necessary to cope with experience. She relates memories from a Polish childhood marked by war and fragmented bodies, and a young adulthood filled with oppression, creativity, and companionship. While waiting in endless lines for the necessities of life, she wrote about her childhood and her art—“not to describe but to find its context.” One con-

text was the crowds whose shifting moods still inform her art. “I wanted to confront man with himself . . . I wanted to bewitch the real crowd.” Her final image is of the Milky Way: “violent, brutal stream of comets and meteors, deriving from the unknown reaching the unknown.”

12. Kenneth Laine Ketner, *His Glassy Essence: An Autobiography of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 11–12.

The artist Alfredo Jaar is several generations younger than Abakanowicz. Yet the signposts of his life, like hers, have been revolution and war: from the upheavals of 1968, when he was a child of twelve in Santiago, Chile; to September 11, 1973, when he saw fighter jets bomb the quarters of President Allende; to more recent horrors like the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, to which he bears eloquent witness. Of greatest importance, he tells us, is “the future for artists now, the order of reality that they must change now, that is all around us.” For a politically engaged artist like Jaar, changing reality by creating art is difficult; he says he has been making art for thirty years and it has never gotten any easier. Jaar writes that the artist could disengage: “you can hold back from the suffering of the world,” as Franz Kafka put it, “but perhaps this very holding back is the one suffering that you could have avoided.”

This first section concludes with a discussion that inaugurated the William and Stephanie Sick Distinguished Professor Lecture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In this exchange, led by educator Lisa Wainwright, artist Kerry James Marshall and designer Bruce Mau engage in a lively, probing debate about what artists and designers have in common, how they are different, and what each contributes to society. Wainwright’s questioning leads Marshall and Mau to reveal how they came to art and what role education played. While academic institutions question what artists, architects, and designers need to know, Mau suggests that art education may be the ideal mode of education for everyone. “I think there is an underlying power and positive effect of invention and creation,” Mau asserts. “We underestimate how important art is. If you could put everyone in society through art school, think about how different it would be to have a general population that . . . embraces the capacity of art to affect the way we see the world.”

The Marshall-Mau discussion is a launching point for part two of *Learning Mind*, which shifts the focus to pedagogy. Charles Peirce’s entry in the *Century Dictionary* tells us that the word “educate” comes from the Latin root *educare*, related to *educere*, in “a sense derived from that of ‘assist at birth.’” Socrates described his own obstetric approach to education as the “maieutic method”: a process of assisting a person in bringing into consciousness his or her own latent conceptions. Peirce’s entry on pedagogy cites its origin from the Greek and defines it as “the training or guiding of boys . . . instruction; discipline.”¹² The more contemporary Wikipedia defines

13. See also Sedgwick, “Pedagogy of Buddhism.”

14. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916); Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972); Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. In his 1938 book *Experience and Education* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), Dewey critiqued “progressive education,” a movement that resulted (in part) from his own theories, arguing that it was too reactionary and took a “free” approach without really knowing how or why freedom is useful in education. He further asserted that a thorough understanding of the nature of human experience must underlie any effective theory of education.

15. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 35.

pedagogy as “the art or science of being a teacher,” adding that pedagogy “is also sometimes referred to as the correct use of teaching strategies.”

The concept of pedagogy clearly has evolved since Peirce’s day—if evolution is even the word for a development that evokes nothing so much as the “skillful means” that the Buddha urged upon his followers.¹³ It is a development that has been much influenced by John Dewey’s educational theory of “learning by doing” with others, and by activist writers like Paolo Freire and Jacques Rancière, who have promoted minimalist liberation pedagogies similarly defined as relational activity.¹⁴ As infra-relational activity, art making is inherently pedagogical because it dissolves restricting mental barriers, thus opening the mind to further experience. “Every experience,” Dewey wrote, “both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after.”¹⁵

In the first essay in this section, “Teaching Discourse: Reflection Strong, Not Theory Light,” curator and educator Mika Hannula reframes the daunting, often opaque relationship of theory and practice by granting young artists freedom to choose those with whom they wish to build a dialogue and then find those authors, texts, or even words within a text that speak to them, connecting to their own work. “We must try to articulate what we are *for*, instead of merely define what we are *against*,” Hannula argues. “Such articulation can be achieved only within a practice that is open-ended, self-critical, and reflexive, in constant search for ways of doing what we do.”

Lisa Wainwright’s essay “Practicing Rauschenberg” complements Hannula’s. Her title plays upon the multiple meanings of art “practice”—(1) to *act*, as opposed to believing or professing; (2) to work at or pursue; (3) to learn by doing; (4) to put to practical use; (5) to act upon by artifice so as to induce or cause to believe—in proposing Robert Rauschenberg’s open, experimental, and above all social approach to art making as a model for young artists seeking a language of their own. “To ‘practice’ Rauschenberg,” Wainwright suggests, “to weave his model into the curriculum of art and design schools, is to provide a creative sampling of media possibilities, highlight material processes, and teach the histories of art and design while staying alert to the present moment.”

Art historian David Getsy writes in his essay, “Pedagogy, Art, and the Rules of the Game,” about how he creatively engages young artists in the classroom by taking seriously the claim that being an artist is a kind of game. “How are rules determined?” Getsy asks. “When are they limiting? When do they encourage creative

solutions? When and how are they broken? . . . These are not idle questions. For better or for worse, an elaborate, ever-changing rule system sets the parameters for art practice, the art market, art institutions, and writing about art.” Getsy suggests that the supposed non-seriousness of games is exactly what enables their serious potential and practical outcomes. A similar claim, he says, can be made about art.

Like Getsy, curator and educator Ute Meta Bauer describes the art world as “a complex system, a field of constellations and interrelations—some friendly to each other, some antagonistic.” She advises that “some knowledge of systems theory, some reading of Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Rorty, and Niklas Luhmann . . . does not hurt in becoming aware of our own entanglements.” Why, she asks, have a number of high-profile curators recently accepted leading positions at art schools and universities? One reason, she suggests, is “the increasing commodification and instrumentalization of the position of curator for all sorts of agendas and desires. . . . Art schools today seem to offer a kind of temporary refuge for those with a desire to sustain a more critical and discursive practice.” For Bauer, “it is also about the challenging possibility and responsibility of transmitting one’s specific understanding and notions of critical artistic and cultural practice to a younger generation” of art students, and the possibility of hope for our cultural future.

Lawrence Rinder is an example of the phenomenon Bauer cites. A former curator of contemporary art at two museums and now a museum director, Rinder interleaved his museum positions with stints at the California College of the Arts—first as gallery director and then as dean of the college. Simultaneous with these administrative and pedagogical roles, however, has been his practice as a writer, a practice honed by contact with art students: “The challenge of putting words to their work, constructing a discourse around practices that are not only in the process of formation but often desperately need clarification and guidance, is closely related to the problematics of art criticism and reveals a troubling lacuna in contemporary art language.” In his essay “Toward a New Critical Pedagogy,” Rinder analyzes trends in recent criticism, concluding that what would best serve both academia and the field of contemporary criticism is an exploration of comparative aesthetic philosophies.

Artist and educator Ronald Jones widens the discourse around issues of pedagogy in the arts with a rigorous reconsideration of just what an expanded field of art practice might mean, clarifying in valuable ways the distinction of multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary ways of working, and the value of moving beyond an art-centered perspective. Ideally, art schools are “learning cultures” that constantly reinterpret

16. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 347.

17. From “The Creative Act,” a talk given by Duchamp to the American Federation of Arts in 1957, first published in Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Paraglyphic Books, 1959), 78.

18. Peirce used the same trope in his first published essay, “The Fixation of Belief” (1877): “Of all kinds of experience, the best, [Roger Bacon] thought, was interior illumination, which teaches many things about Nature which the external senses could never discover, such as the transubstantiation of bread.” In 1878 he translated the essay into French for the *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’Étranger*. See *Chance, Love, and Logic: Philosophical Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1923), 8.

the world and their relationship to it. Learning cultures see failure as an advantage, one that opens up the capacity for change and transcendence. The key to potential transcendence is, counterintuitively, failure: “Fail again. Fail better,” Jones urges, quoting Samuel Beckett. Jones sees too many educational institutions imitating success elsewhere, without assuming the risk of innovation and the promise of failure. “Could it be true,” Jones asks rhetorically, “that significant precincts in the art and design world . . . have been left on the other side of the widening gap between developed and developing disciplines?”

A good example of transdisciplinary practice has been chef and educator Alice Waters’s project, the Edible Schoolyard. “Coming Back to Our Senses,” a dialogue between Waters and landscape architect and educator Walter Hood, moves through the intertwined terrains of art, education, and society. Their discussion of nurturing children by helping them acquire skills and attain a sense of values through gardening and cooking looks to an education that fuses an understanding of beauty in diversity with the interrelationship of all forms of life. “Food is our common language,” Waters says. “We all eat. We all eat every day. And if we’re eating with intention, and we’re eating real food, and we’re connecting with where that food comes from, and we’re involved in the process of making it and offering it to our classmates . . . and gathering around the table, then these ideas of community just emerge very naturally.” Hood expands upon her thoughts, commenting that this “enmeshing” concept allows us to “go beyond a single dimension and begin to weave everything into our communal experience. All of these things that we do as artists together can create this open-ended environmental system.”

The third section, “On Experiencing Art,” comprises essays, conversations, and reflections on the effect of art “making” within the mind of the viewer or participant. “Works of art are means by which we enter, through imagination and the emotions they evoke, into other forms of relationship and participation than our own,” Dewey wrote. “This insensible melting is far more efficacious than the change effected by reasoning, because it enters directly into attitude.”¹⁶ As for the “effect” of this process on the artwork, Duchamp famously opined that in response to the “realization” of a creative act by the artist, “the spectator experiences the phenomenon of transmutation: through the change from inert matter into a work of art, an actual transubstantiation has taken place.”¹⁷ (Note that Duchamp uses “realization” in the same sense as Dewey: making experience available to the senses.) Duchamp’s allusion here is to the Eucharist, wherein what looks and tastes like bread and wine is *experienced* as the body and blood of Christ.¹⁸ It is a brilliant elaboration on Dewey, who, twenty-three years earlier, had written, “A work of art . . . is actually, not just

potentially, a work of art only when it lives in some individualized experience . . . as a work of art, it is re-created every time it is esthetically experienced.”¹⁹

19. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 108.

The section opens with a cluster of essays analyzing the experience of specific works of art in the context of the environment they create. Mary Jane Jacob describes Anish Kapoor’s *Cloud Gate*, a monumental sculpture at Chicago’s Millennium Park, which she encounters every workday. She finds *Cloud Gate* “an engaging, relational experience that transcends its objectness,” a true gateway, a liminal realm that captures and holds, enabling viewers to focus on the nature of reality. What the polished surface of *Cloud Gate* reflects, Jacob notes, is beyond self and place and is located in an understanding gleaned through its presence in everyday circumstances. While its materials and site have both been transformed, it is, Jacob asserts, “our own experience that undergoes the greatest transformation” within the enveloping form of *Cloud Gate*.

In his essay, “This Is Nowhere,” curator Christopher Bedford discusses the lack of critical understanding the work of Robert Irwin encountered until relatively recently. Now we are, however briefly, “able to see and write about Irwin’s work for what it is: a theoretically invested practice, but *not* a theory-dependent experience.” Irwin believes that “the critic’s only valid function is to clear away the extraneous considerations and return us, naked, to the experience before us.” Drawing on the artist’s own published writings, critical texts, and the work of phenomenologists and aestheticians that Irwin values, Bedford illuminates the relationship of theory to Irwin’s work, with particular attention to how this relationship has affected the experience of seeing, writing about, and evaluating the artist’s achievements.

“What are you looking at?” critic and art historian Michael Brenson heard the sculptor Juan Muñoz “declare” to be his first artistic question. For Brenson, Muñoz’s question raised a host of others: “Who are you? . . . But also—who the hell are you? And what are you doing here? What right do you have to look? What are your plans for what you are looking at?” Brenson’s essay on the questing “look” of the artist leads him to examine how, in looking, artist and audience share the same inquiry, engaged in an act of making, remaking, and learning. In the end, Brenson concludes, we will always need “artists who remember history . . . and who are willing to take the risks of looking back.”

Theorist and educator W.J.T. Mitchell writes on his experience and associations with Abakanowicz’s *Agora*. A grouping of 106 over-life-size, cast-iron, headless, hollow bodies, this installation calls up for Mitchell the terra-cotta army excavated near Xi’an, from the tomb of the first Chinese emperor. On the other hand, Aba-

kanowicz's images strike him "as an apparition of the historical present, as if her figures had somehow congealed in their molten forms some essential intuition into the dominant ideologies and images of our time." This agora, Mitchell concludes, could represent "a common humanity that knows no borders, presents no stereotyped or lying faces, and is thus heedless of the racial, sexual, and religious divisions that plague our species."

Jacquelynn Baas uses a recent exhibition of artistic depictions of emptiness to launch a discussion of a phenomenon she calls "Unframing Experience." Baas brings both the Buddhist conception of emptiness and recent developments in evolutionary neuroscience to bear on a discussion of consciousness, and suggests an inverse relationship between the degree of framing or categorization with which perception "makes sense of" sensation, and the effectiveness of art experience. Art intended to generate this expanded field of perception links maker, viewer, and environment within continuous, multidimensional reality. As examples she cites the work of Duchamp and his godson, Gordon Matta-Clark, along with more recent work by Olafur Eliasson, Ai Weiwei, and Ann Hamilton.

The final essays in this section all reference the most recent *documenta*, in 2007 in Kassel, Germany, thus constituting something of a "case study" of art experience. In "The Unknown Child" Ulrich Schötker, who has worked on the past three installments of *documenta*, relates how, for the past fifteen years, the notion of art mediation (*Kunstvermittlung*) has referred to a field of artistic agency in German-speaking countries. Schötker holds up as a theoretical model Georges Bataille, for whom "non-productive self-expenditure" promised an emotive form of communication that can be cultivated toward the formation of a society based on difference. The "unknown child" became one significant member of the exhibition's large and varied public, who here, for the first time, was treated as an "expert" and agent of his or her self.

The studies of artists Ronen Eidelman, Oğuz Tatari, and Carolyn Bernstein developed as part of a class excursion to both *documenta 12* and the nearby *Skulptur Projekte* in Münster. Based on first cultivating a greater awareness of their own experience of art and the conditions that foster it, these young artists were asked to analyze the various ways in which different publics experience art. Directly observing others' experiences, they attempted to glean a sense of how the public looks at a work of art and considers its meaning, form, content, and context. Perceptive and animated writings by Eidelman and Tatari bring us into the experience of others through their personal descriptions. Eidelman describes, in words and sketches, the types of visitors to such large, international shows. Tatari links his experience

and those of others in Kassel and Münster, reflecting beyond specific places and moments as he unframes his own experience. Meanwhile Bernstein created an evocative suite of photographs that offers a sense of the totality of experience in the galleries at *documenta 12*.

20. Linda V. Bamber, "Reading as a Buddhist," in *Buddha Mind*, 147.

21. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 2.

Finally, "The Empty Conversation" is the edited transcript of a public discussion at *documenta 12* between Schötker, Baas, and Jacob around questions having to do with the Taoist/Buddhist concept of emptiness, art mediation, and the ideal state of mind with which to view an exhibition. Schötker is interested in understanding art as a negative space, especially with regard to Theodor Adorno, Niklas Luhmann, and George Spencer Brown. Jacob and Baas focus on Buddhist philosophy—the dissolution of self, and emptiness as a motif in Buddhist mind-training techniques. Turning time and again to *documenta 12*, they look to the works exhibited there, the mode of installation and use of space, and even the absence of art and artifice, examining how all contribute to the experience of art and its potential for self-transformation.

While books about art are not the art, we imagine that this anthology may both instruct on experience and *be* an experience. In an essay in our earlier book, *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, poet Linda V. Bamber suggested that "maybe all reading—all absorbed and impassioned reading, that is—is reading as a Buddhist, whether you're a Buddhist or not."²⁰ With the present book, we ask you, the reader—no matter who you are—to read as an artist, whether you normally think of yourself as an artist or not. It could prove to be a useful practice, for these essays imply that there may be no such thing as art experience separate from experience in general or—put another way—from so-called everyday life.

Dewey also wrote that "in order to understand the meaning of artistic products, we have to forget them for a time, to turn aside from them and have recourse to the ordinary forces and conditions of experience that we do not usually regard as esthetic."²¹ Abakanowicz suggests something similar in our epigraph, where she responds to her own question, "Am I more than the sum of my experiences?" with, "There is time involved." One thing books do have in common with works of art is that we can revisit them over time—re-read or allow them to "crystallize into shapes or sounds" in the course of lived experience. We offer this book with the hope that it will become part of your experience.

The thought that preceded words on the page was the product of many dialogues between colleagues and with faculty and students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. We were fortunate in this process to be a part of the Emily Hall Tre-

maine University and Art School Initiative, devoted to developing tools for young artists to make their way in the world. With Tremaine support, we brought minds to this task that had in their own ways struggled with these questions on physical, metaphysical, conceptual, and practical levels. The essays of Jacquelynn Baas, Arthur Danto, and Mark Epstein were first lectures, and Marcia Tucker's text was a symposium keynote address. On other like occasions, thanks to the Tremaine Foundation, the writings of Ute Meta Bauer, Michael Brenson, and Larry Rinder were also first lectures given at the School. Guided by Dean Carol Becker and then Lisa Wainwright, the intellectual community of the School joined in the process. As the life of the artist is at the core of the SAIC mission, the writings of Ann Hamilton, Alfredo Jaar, and Jerry Saltz began as dialogues with the student body from the commencement podium, while the dialogue of Kerry James Marshall and Bruce Mau with Wainwright was a special school program. Additionally, one of our active academic partners, Liz Bachhuber at the Bauhaus Universität Weimar, provided an energizing context that led to the work of Ronen Eidelman, Oğuz Tatari, and Carolyn Bernstein. This last piece of the book originated in Germany, as an assignment came to life in the course of our joint study trip to Münster and Kassel, where the "Empty Conversation" also originated. In classes, discussions, and personal moments with students, we began to see how these texts-in-information could contribute profoundly to art students' thinking about themselves and the world.

A wide-ranging publication such as this is the work of many hands. In Chicago, assistant curator Kate Zeller monitored its development on every front; her constant care and attentiveness do not go unnoticed in this and all tasks she undertakes. Thanks to Jessica Mott Wickstrom of Jess Mott Design, this book emerged visually as well as textually. With her usual creativeness, Jess contributed the overall design concept, and patiently worked through many revisions that enabled us all to see what this book could be.

Deborah Kirshman of University of California Press, with whom we had the pleasure of working on our earlier book, *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, was again an essential collaborator. It is a special pleasure to thank Deborah for her advice and keen guidance through the multi-year process of shaping, writing, and bringing this book to fruition. We also want to thank our skillful editor, Sue Heine-mann, as well as our copyeditor, Mary Yakush. UC Press's Eric Schmidt and Erica Lee provided valuable administrative support, while compositor Suzanne Harris helped give the book final form and Pam Augspurger facilitated production. We do not want to overlook the debt of gratitude we owe our anonymous readers for UC

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