



The Remembering by Mihaela Slabé

**Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry:
Special Issue, Summer 2021**

**Multisensory Stories:
Celebrating Different Forms of Knowing,
Being, and Living in Our World**

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Hosted by:
University of Alberta Libraries

Access online via:
University of Alberta Libraries, "Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry"

Cover Title: “*The Remembering*”

Artist: Mihaela Slabé

Artist Statement

This artwork is an intuitive self-portrait, inspired by the pieces included in this journal that explore memory through multi-sensory experiences. I tried to create through various ways of knowing. I wanted to make something that you could run your fingers along, and feel the different textures, the bumps in the grain of the wood, the brush strokes, the paper flowers, the cloth material, all of it. If you got close to it, I wanted you to be able to smell the mix of coffee, acrylic paint, and the subtle aroma of dried flowers. I wanted to invoke textures through sight with various patterns and mark making. Lastly, I used past journal entries to create the flowers adding another layer of memory to the artwork that is unique and personal to me, reflecting on how each person’s way of remembering is their own.

Multisensory Stories: Celebrating Different Forms of Knowing, Being, and Living in Our World

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Making research accessible.

Celebrating difference.

Creating stories through our senses.

These words guide our Multisensory Studio Lab (www.multisensorystudio.ca), a place where a community of artists and scholars come together to (re)imagine and celebrate different forms of knowing, being, and living so that society can be accessible for everyone.

Imagine designing research that prioritizes sensory knowledge beyond the written and spoken word. This is not the same as gathering sensory data and transposing it into written text; it calls for research that is innovative, creative, and participatory: from the beginning and into knowledge translation. To do so, the Arts play a pivotal role in amplifying presentational and practical knowing, while being interconnected to propositional and experiential knowledge (Heron & Reason, 1997).

For instance, “The Cut of It” (See <https://vimeo.com/638022415>), is a film about the experiences of breast cancer patients and a creative form of knowledge translation where we tried to make research more accessible to a much larger public. The film is based on research where patients created digital stories (See www.patientstories.ca). Subsequently, Meghan Greeley created a stage play that was produced by Ruth Lawrence of White Rooster Theatre as a theatre performance. Importantly, several of the original research participants also took to the stage as actors. The process was collaborative in the development of both the theatre production and the film. It is worth noting that after each performance of the play, there was a 45-minute panel discussion consisting of an actor, the director, the playwright, a member of the research team, and a research participant – with a moderator (who was also a research participant).

In this process, there is important knowledge in creating such stories because our senses are in concert with one another in praxis. When painting, the how/why/what/when are mixed in the colours, the layering, and the movements in the work. This process can be challenging when asked to tease out and categorize methodologies and data collection as being separate and discrete from analysis and findings. Understandably, there are complexities with these approaches of knowledge making. Ownership, authorship, costs, resources, ethics, balancing the requirements of the academy and the needs and responsibilities of the participants, all need to be taken into consideration. Particularly, if participation and collaboration are embedded in the knowledge making process.

For research to be accessible, systemic ableism must be acknowledged and addressed in order to allow spaces for stories and embodied ways of knowing to develop. Currently, at the Multisensory Studio we are working closely with disabled youth and community partners in developing accessible online digital storytelling processes that amplify stories of significant life-

stage transitions. We invite you to bear witness to these stories and celebrate these storytellers in 2023 on our online platform, www.multisensorystudio.ca

Telling Stories with Our Senses

Taste. Smell. Sound. Sight. Touch. *Embodied ways of knowing.*

Spring. My mother's homemade Belgian recipe passed on from generation to generation

to generation

to generation

The aroma of spices from the kitchen take over the house.

It's 1979 and all the cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents are over for Easter dinner.

We run outside to watch the pigeons come back from a race.

Summer. I'm passing by a barber shop. The door opens. I recognize that smell.

The smell of tobacco. My father's pipe tobacco.

I'm brought back to my seven-years-old self, watching my dad in the garage at his work bench.

Fall. I see white birch trees on my run.

Snow packing under my runners.

Step, by, step.

The kind of trees I climbed in front of my home. In the fall.

The kind of bark we used for paper. For making treasure maps. For writing secrets.

The kind of trees that hold stories.

Winter. My daughter picks the song "Three little birds" on her guitar.

Calm.

The house feels still.

We leave the house to pick up the mail. Walking down the street,

My son puts his hand in mine.

Snow on my cheek.

My world is perfect.

Memories, (re)member.

CPI Special Issue: Multisensory Storytelling

This Special Issue invites the audience to consider story through multiple senses. While the journal provides a 2-dimensional format, where touch, smell, and taste are taken up through descriptive terms, we ask you to heighten your awareness to your own environment in the reading, listening, and witnessing of these stories. The sounds, the smells, and the physical space. How might your own sensorium influence the ways in which you take in these stories?

Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry, Summer 2021, 13(1), pp. 1-6

ISSN 1916-3460 © 2021 University of Alberta

<http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/cpi/index>

Momina Khan's "Three Poems" tells us of her personal journey of self and place as a Muslim Pakistani Canadian woman. Beautifully woven together, Khan shares her embodied knowledge through multi-layered stories of repair, renewal, and wisdom with vivid imagery of cross-cultural encounters. Similarly, **Cyril Dabydeen** in "Twins" shares story through poetry and invites the reader to explore different responses to race based on a real incident.

Visual storytelling invites the audience to consider story in creative layered prose, through shadows, colours, textures, and shapes. **Natalie Beausoleil's** mixed media visually depict her autobiography of research and life experience of beauty, illness, health, and stories of struggle, where emotion is dripping off the canvas through colour and shapes. **Sheliza Ladhani** in "Fractured intimacies in (re)membering" is an intimate collection of black and white photographs exploring the temporality of memories. She invites the viewer to bear witness to her stories of memory. As she explains: "Memory, she is slippery, blurring the edges, overlapping until the new eclipses the old."

Multimodal media is powerful in a sensorium of sensory stimuli, where interpretation can take on multiple forms. **Carol Campbell's** "Re-visioning fragments of a life in Jamaica" combines photographs with the essay that describes the deconstruction of a 120-year-old Spanish wall house in rural Jamaica, and the memories and histories that were part of the Vassel's former home. In the film "Knowledge translation in COVID-19 times: The experience of art engagement" **Barbara Groot, Janine Schrijver, Lieke de Kock, and Tineke Abma** share a visual story of a project interconnected with mediation, theatre, photography, and presentation to consider how knowledge mobilization can be done during COVID-19 that embraces multisensory knowing. Through video, I share a piece entitled "Moments of home," a three-minute multi-layered story that combines soundscapes and visual imagery, as an attempt to unpack the popular media messages with what unfolds in a household with children-and-parent balancing life in isolation.

Geneve Berkenkamp, Surya Butterworth, Noah Derkat, Chelsea Godschild, Alison L. Grittner, and Shane Yu's short film "Disrupting settler amnesia," includes five sensory land-based stories that grew from a Bachelor of Social Work assignment. As a form of sensory land-based field work, this powerful film combines spoken word poetry, photography, soundscapes, narration, watercolours and beading. Indeed, blended sensory stories call the audience to attune to the ways story is being (re)created through embodied knowledge. **Carly-Ann Haney and Rob Horlacher's** "Gaslighting of the 'compromised': Disabled and fat during the COVID-19 pandemic" combine photography, poetry, and narrative to tell stories that reflect experiences of navigating COVID-19 in their bodies. In **Sandy Rao's** compelling multi-narrative account, "Exploring foodways as embodied knowledge and multisensory storytelling," Rao uses imagery, audio recordings, and the written word to draw the audience into the sense of taste. Her graphic description of smell, and explanation of how food is central to our understanding of histories invites the reader to see the world through her eyes. Central to this journey with Rao, is food as a means of discovery, celebration of love, and ways of connecting to culture.

The cover of this Special Issue was created by artist **Mihaela Slabé**, titled: "The Remembering," - this beautiful and moving piece explores the themes of memory through multi-sensory experiences. Slabé encourages the audience to imagine the different textures and the aroma of the media in the work, while reflecting on the different ways we know and experience the world.



Opening Mind and Heart

References

- Heron, J., & Reason, P. (1997). A Participatory Inquiry Paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 274-294. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300302>