

***Hello, Welcome, & Thank You***



# Get Comfortable

- Refreshments
- Restroom
- Temperature
- Introductions





# A Dissertation Proposal Defense

by

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Presented to the honored dissertation committee:



**Dr. Charles McAuley**  
Chair



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Internal Member



**Dr. Michael Schwartz**  
External Member



# Agenda & Key Content

Greetings	Get Comfortable	Introductions	Opening Remarks
Inquiry Question	Guided Visualization: Grounding & Creating Sacred Space	Abstract	Theoretical Perspectives & Methodological Approaches
A Fairy Tale Example: The Handless Maiden	Significance	Current Definition of Art	Literature Review: Summary of Key Research
Hypothesis & Assertions Overview	Chapter Breakdown & Assertions Summary: Chapters 1, 2, & 3	Application Activity	Scope & Critical Assessment
	Timeline	Thank You, Questions, & Discussion	

# Inquiry Question:

**Why Does Art Exist:**  
If art has a function & purpose,  
what is art's function and  
purpose?



Pollock, J., (1949). Number 17.



# Guided Visualization

- Close your eyes and clear your mind, remove the lists and agendas, you are here now, where you are supposed to be.
- Bring your attention to your body. From your head to your toes release and relax any tension.
- Think of your happy place.
- Is it on a beach, a mountain top, or in a garden?
- Imagine the details of your happy place.
- What colors, smells, people, and skin sensations are in your happy place?
- How do you feel?
- Has your breathing changed?
- If you have done this exercise, you have used your imagination to create an image with sensory associations that have altered your state of being.



This theoretical dissertation proposal discusses the inquiry question: why does art exist? If art has a function and purpose, what is art's function and purpose? This research is done, in part, as a rationale for proliferating the arts, and especially for use in educational curricula. The arts are redefined through this research.

## **Abstract**

# Theoretical Perspectives & Methodological Approaches

- Within a theoretical dissertation, this research is attempting to develop a broad trans or multi-disciplinary hypothesis and aspires to eventually develop a theory for why the arts exist.
- The primary theoretical leans is critical aesthetics as a sub-category of critical theory dealing exclusively with cultural products as a covert postmodern tool to subvert a dominant paradigm (Crowther, 1996; Dorsey, 2009).
- It is anticipated that the arts will be analyzed through a synthesis of critical aesthetic and scientific theoretical perspectives.
- By using the sciences to support the arts, this inquiry uses a critical theoretical technique of subverting the oppressive aspects of society to reform beliefs— in this case beliefs about the arts.
- This theoretical dissertation proposes to present research using an arts method, a digital and printed antique-style *zine* workbook, containing activities for audience participation. The dissertation defense may be an interactive performance art exhibit of the research.



# Example: The Handless Maiden



A handless maiden wandered with nothing through the forest not knowing where she was going. By nightfall she was very hungry and arrived at a royal garden. In the moonlight she could see trees covered with ripe pears, but she couldn't pluck them with her stumps. Using only her mouth, she was able to eat a pear. The maiden then retreated back into the forest.

The next day, the king was counting his pears, for he knew exactly how many were on each tree, he realized that one was missing from the day before. The king was curious and decided to watch the garden that night. After dark, out of the forest, came the handless maiden who began to eat a pear, just as she had the night before. The king rushed to the maiden and promised to take care of her and took her to his castle. He loved the maiden with all his heart and had his magician forge her a pair of silver hands, and then took her as his wife. And so the maiden became a queen with beautiful silver hands.

*This is an example of how I anticipate using fairytales in the dissertation, to introduce and illuminate concepts. This story also exemplifies some of my ideas on the many functions of the arts. In my view, the letters are pictures for sounds, and are art. The story is art, and the hands in the story are art (sculpture). This fable has personal meaning for me as a symbol of my PhD journey, a summary and metaphor for a long and complex experience.*



## Significance

- ▶ **Personal:** Throughout my life I have observed that the arts appear to be a transformative, life enhancing tool. I also noticed that the societal main stream does not take this view. This research is an effort to champion the arts for all of their amazing potential.
- ▶ **Academic:** The dissertation plans to address many of the disparate concepts about the arts in a variety of fields to develop a consensus about the nature of the arts and art's efficacy. Recent arts research in the natural and physical sciences have arisen from new technological developments used to study physical processes in real time. The comprehensive breadth of this inquiry has not been found applied to the arts. The author aspires to influence academic practice by exhibiting the benefits of using art to promote and accelerate learning and problem solving.
- ▶ **Social:** Discoveries about the arts often reach *pop* culture and influence everything from child rearing and education (*Mozart Effect*, Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1994) to Alzheimer's treatments (*Alive Inside*, Rozzato-Bennett, 2014). Shaping public opinion and policy to integrate the arts more into society is a research goal.

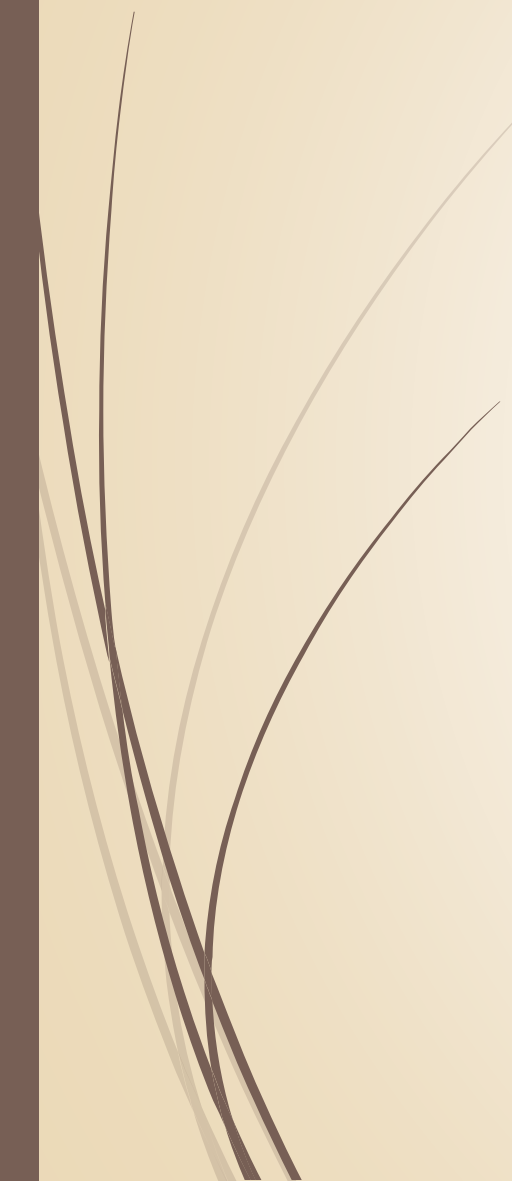
# Current Definition of Art

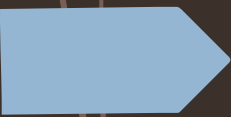
- The term *art* in the European dominated world usually includes a variety of creative activities, from painting and music, to literature and dance (“Art,” 2017c).
- Often mentioned in definitions of art are works produced to be appreciated for their beauty and emotional power (“Art,” 2017c).
- The term arts also refer to academic disciplines whose emphasis is on human creativity and social life, such as the social sciences and humanities as opposed to the natural and physical sciences (“Art,” 2017c).
- The definitions outlined previously in this paragraph are often referred to throughout this proposal as fine art, visual and performing arts, art, and arts.
- In the art world, there is often a division between the concepts of fine art, craft, and folk art (Dockstader, 1966). For the purposes of this inquiry no such division exists. In this dissertation proposal, fine art, craft, and folk art are equally referred to as fine art, visual and performing arts, art, and arts.





# Literature Review

- ▶ The texts included in this literature review were selected based on their relevance to, and relationship to visual and performing arts through shared processes or concepts.
  - ▶ Studies were included that relate to vision because the visual arts (painting, sculpture, and so on) rely on sight (Baars & Gage, 2013; Likova, 2012; Woollett & Maguire, 2011).
  - ▶ Literature was included about the arts regarding symbols, playing musical instruments, and aesthetic evaluation (Bangert & Schlaug, 2006; Jung, 1972; Shimamura, 2013).
  - ▶ The dissertation is anticipated to include new information on art's impact on evolution, art's role in human biology, arts function in society, additional information on art's effects on the brain, art's applications especially in education and the workforce, and group as well as individual psychological/mental art's functions.
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# Working Hypothesis & Primary Assertions As Chapter Breakdown & Summary

## Working Hypothesis:

- The arts may exist to summarize experience.

## Chapter/Assertions:

1. The arts regulate mind/body states as a coping mechanism.
2. The arts access the root of the biological sense-to-symbol translation mechanisms of the brain/body.
3. The arts develop acuity in key physical and mental brain/body systems that would otherwise not exist, which promotes thriving in living beings.

## Note:

*To better fit with a “trans” or multi-disciplinary model, as a part of my evolving inquiry, I have modified this dissertation proposal defense presentation from the written proposal document by organizing the chapters based on the primary assertions, though the content of the chapters is still organized as the current proposal suggests. It is anticipated that the details of the content will stray from the current content of each proposed chapter. This presentation also combines assertions 3 & 4 to more accurately reflect my revised understanding of the arts.*

# Application Exercise: Chant & Rhythm Count

➤ Art AMPSS up learning

➤ Research shows, if you do **ART: MOVE, PLAY, SING, or SEE** you **learn faster, deeper, and better.**

So

➤ Art it: Move it, Play it, Sing it, See it,  
to know it faster, deeper, better.

➤ Art it to know it faster, deeper, better.

➤ Move it to know it faster, deeper, better.

➤ Play it to know it faster, deeper, better.

➤ Sing it to know it faster, deeper, better.

➤ See it to know it faster, deeper, better.






# Scope & Critical Assessment

- To develop a unifying hypothesis for why art exists trans or multi-disciplinary literature will be included that relate to the arts through shared activities (visual, auditory, etc.).
- The focus of this research is on humans, though the hypothesis contained herein, is intended to be applicable to a wide array of species.
- This dissertation is not about individual artworks per se, but is about the mechanisms used to create and perceive the arts and the reasons the arts exist.
- A greater variety of supporting information is predicted in the completed dissertation, especially increasing the physics material, art's sacred elements, sociology, arguments for arts evolutionary role, mirror neuron's function, as well as art's impact on the economy and learning.




## Timeline


After the proposal phase of the PhD. process, if this proposed research merits advancement to candidacy, the timeline for the dissertation research and research analysis is approximately one year. A great deal of research has already been done for this inquiry.



The next phase is primarily a matter of compiling and organizing existing research, reading research already found, and filling in research gaps.



There should be chapters ready for preliminary review by the dissertation chair within the first six months after being advanced to candidacy.



The writing/creating phase of the dissertation will be approximately one to two years depending on delays in the technical editing process. This is a generous estimate of the timeframe, and the entire dissertation is anticipated to be completed in no more than two years.

# Thank You!

Lunch & Dessert:  
Questions, comments, & discussion.  
**What do you imagine art to be?**





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