

# If Art Requires Words, Shouldn't Words Require Art?

Leah T. Dudak

Syracuse University, iSchool, USA

ltdudak@syr.edu

## ABSTRACT

At the 2023 ALISE conference I presented in the Works in Progress (WIP) poster session. At this session, I not only highlighted the work that I was doing through my poster, but brought an autoethnographic shawl describing my loss of self to the library. By pairing this shawl with my poster, I was cautiously creating space for artistic expression in academic conferences and as a way of legitimate research dissemination. I presented my shawl at the WIP session, because there was no clear place that I could share this piece. And while art was not a requirement for the WIP session, out of the 68 posters, only one incorporated art—mine.

As such, I propose a visual quilt that highlights that singular presence, emphasizing the tension between art and academia. While art is expected to conform and fit into academic standards, academia rarely adapts to accommodate art.

Engaging in art in academia is not just an act of creativity and expression, it is a form of decolonial resistance. It requires additional labor not only to justify art's place in scholarly discourse, but also to find a place to share it, and to do more work for only a fraction of the recognition and acceptance that a paper could receive. The quilt also reflects the larger dismissal of art as non-scholarly and/or non-serious. The dismissal is further amplified by the medium in which I create - quilting, knitting, and crocheting, which are often considered crafts and not art at all, primarily due to their status of being often created by women (Ball, 2008), which further impacts how the legitimacy of the output is seen in academic spaces.

# **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Research methods; Pedagogy; Information practices; Critical librarianship.

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Art as method; Expansive research methods; Autoethnography.

Copyright 2025 by the authors. Published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2025.2010>

## **REFERENCES**

Ball, H. K. (2008). Quilts. In *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues* (pp. 363–368).