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Indigenous Methodologies: A Collaborative Painting with Maya Painter Paula Nicho Cúmez

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Abstract

The twofold purpose of the present essay and video is to extend and refine my indigenous research methodology based on the work of Smith (2012) and Eldridge (2008), first, by offering new ways to conceptualize the presentation of relational experience in collaborative ethnographic work in academia, and second, by examining what it means for art educators to work with communities over an extended period of time. In this essay and video, I include myself as a participant and mentored student, an intrinsic part of the research process, not something separate. The research process and the mentoring model are intrinsically intertwined, so viewer access to the teaching relationship in the video illuminates the research process. I present this ethnography in art education from the anthropological perspective of lifelong practice that examines subtle differences in art teaching practice and evolving changes in research methodology over time. This video and essay, the third in a series of reflective *Visual Culture & Gender* (VCG) journal articles about decolonizing and indigenous research methodologies, demonstrates important changes for me that can inform art education about the value of long-term research. My main finding in this essay and video is that the explicit revelation of the relationship between the two participants, Paula Nicho Cúmez and me, is of paramount importance in the representation of such research. Only when the self-aware researcher presents herself in collaboration and revisits the video-documented collaboration can she discover multilevel opportunities for deep reflection about differing definitions of artistic processes, the generation of ideas, and the nuanced dynamics of mentor-based instruction as a research model.

Keywords: Indigenous methodologies, Paula Nicho Cúmez, Maya painting

Introduction

In my 2006 VCG essay, I documented mentored painting lessons with Maya artist Paula Nicho Cúmez through images of artwork and text and described our painting process from my perspectives only.[1] Attempting to decolonize my own research methods (Smith, 2012) in my 2008 VCG essay, I added a video in which Paula speaks directly to the audience about her work. But when I presented this video at a conference, an indigenous audience member critiqued my position of distance as "studying about" rather than "studying with." So I asked myself what was still missing. How could I demonstrate what I both received and offered? Therefore, my research question became: How do I make the work represent us, not just Paula? In fact, isn't indigenous research about the recognition of relationship? This recognition is what Smith (2012) requests when she suggests that the researcher ask the following critical questions:

> Whose research is it?
> Who owns it?
> Whose interests does it serve?
> Who will benefit from it?
> Who has designed its questions and framed its scope?
> Who will carry it out?
> Who will write it up?
> How will its results be disseminated? (p. 10)

Smith also lists the questions the indigenous communities ask themselves about the researcher:

> Is her spirit clear?
> Does he have a good heart?
> What other baggage are they carrying?
> Are they useful to us?
> Can they fix up our generator?
> Can they actually do anything? (p. 10)

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1. Although academic convention refers to people by their last names, I refer to Paula Nicho Cúmez as Paula because she is my dear friend and asked me to do so.

Although I had constantly asked myself these layered questions throughout a decade of research, I now realized more deeply I also had to do so in presenting this research to earn respect for it.

Therefore, in the video of this 2014 essay, I document Paula's and my working process as mentor and student painting together. Using video in this way lets the viewer enter the research arena to witness guided artistic collaboration as it unfolds. Thus, the video is part of the research methodology. In it, the reporting of the research process is relational rather than journalistic because it shows collaboration. When I presented this video at an international conference, the indigenous people in the audience told me that it gratified them: they saw the process Paula and I were engaging in was indeed collaborative; I was showing, not telling. Their reaction was an epiphany for me. All of these years studying with Maya painting mentors, I had been talking and writing about the importance of relationship to transmit knowledge between teacher and student. Yet, I had not realized the evidence of this caring relationship was also paramount in presenting this research. In graduate school in the United States, I was taught that research means distance from the subject of study, and as much as I would like to think that I had transcended such perspectives, such points of view still interfered, as I was just now realizing the importance of witnessing a caring relationship in the presentation of this work. The scholarly reporting in my first two VCG articles was not enough; the perceived respectful relationship witnessed through this video presentation convinced the audience that this was empathetic, collaborative, and socially just research.

In the present essay and video, I extend and refine my indigenous research methodology based on the work of Smith (2012) and Eldridge (2008). I reconceptualize the presentation of the relational in collaborative work in the academy, and I make a case for the importance of longitudinal ethnographic work with communities in art education. In art education, ethnography is often related to classroom and community research or to contemporary studio practice (Desai, 2002; Gates, 2010; Michel, 2004; Trafi-Prats, 2009), but rarely is it considered or presented over a longer period of time in the anthropological sense of lifelong ethnographic practice that involves subtle differences in art practice and research methodology throughout a lifespan. Ethnography defines collaborative work with a community differently. For ethnographers, it is a lifelong commitment (Lassiter, 2008; Lawless, 1993; Madison, 2005; Nugent, 2012), especially when indigenous research methodologies as described by Smith result in lifelong friendships. This series of three articles over eight years demonstrates significant changes in the research process that now more fully incorporates an indigenous methodology and explores inquiry into how to present indigenous research, which can inform art education about the value of such long-term work.

In redefining how I report collaborative ethnographic work in this essay, I present myself alongside Paula in the video as both a participant in the research and her student. The mentoring model is the research process guided by the indigenous expert; therefore, viewer access to the teaching dynamic in the video illuminates the research process. And the process I am now showing is Paula's and mine. In both the translation and the editing, including myself completely transforms the idea of representation. In this video, I moved from attempting to represent only somebody else's experience to representing the lessons as I experienced them. I was aware not only of presenting the evidence of our lessons together more conscientiously to let the viewer see what was taking place, but also of demonstrating that the ideas for the painting were conceived collaboratively, a further step in the mentoring relationship. Our work together provided a space for Paula to make a painting she had wanted to make for a long time but could not until our work together coalesced into the perfect opportunity for us. She revealed that some of the conceptual strategies in our painting were completely new for her and in our work together. Paula's recognition of her benefit in completing this collaborative painting illustrates the answers to Smith's (2012) questions about whose interests are served and who benefits. Additionally, in the interview by Delia, Paula's daughter, Paula mentions our mutual understanding because I am a colleague, a female artist, and a trusted friend. Paula's recognition of our friendship springs from her perception of my clear spirit and good heart.

This is not to say that my perspective as researcher is not evident: I edited the video, but differently this time. In editing it, I was recollecting my own experience of participation, not trying to represent the integrity of someone else from my subjective perspective as a Western artist

and academic. Distance was still there, as I was looking back on my own experience and trying to show it to reflect our series of steps in making the painting, eliminating only the hours when I painted alone. The time-lapse section shrank the hours of the lesson into a shorter video to include all of the footage while shortening the time involved in the painting. The beginning, middle, and end of the video corresponded to our painting process. The interview at the end of the video reflected both Paula's and my desire to speak about the work and to thank each other. My editing choices were based on wanting to demonstrate the content of the lessons, the painting context, and the importance of family participation.

Figure 1. Click above to view a video on artist/teacher Paula Nicho Cúmez and me—learner, researcher, and artist. Paula's daughter spontaneously interviews Paula and me from behind the camera. When I finished editing and before final subtitling, Paula reviewed the video, and I changed the voiceover on the time lapse to correspond exactly with what she wanted us to present, no more, no less.

I had been using Smith's protocols, living with and becoming a part of the families of my mentors during the research process. But until this video, I was not presenting our work together as relational. In contrast with my prior work, this video and essay manifest that realization.

A Collaborative Painting with Maya Painter Paula Nicho Cúmez

The video opens with Maya Kaqchikel painter Paula Nicho Cúmez and me, a painter and art educator from the United States, sitting in a small room, one of the studio spaces in her home in Guatemala, which extends to her garden with its exterior living, washing, and cooking space. Because of my ten-year relationship with Paula, I am invited into her living and family space for lessons. Initially, we did not work in Paula's home, but rather in her store. However, due to our longstanding friendship based on mutual trust, I have now become a part of her daily life, and each day between morning and afternoon classes, we shop and make lunch together with her eldest daughter. They have both laughed as I fail miserably at *tortillando*, making tortillas manually.

The cultural protocol referred to by Smith (2012) regarding the establishment of a long-term relationship that extends beyond a research relationship to one involving families and communities is now a part of our lives. For example, Paula and I shared a hotel room at the Smithsonian opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington in fall 2004, where 10,000 Native peoples gathered from the Americas to celebrate the opening. I was Paula's translator, and she asked me to march alongside her in the traditional clothing for Kaqchikel women she made for me. When I got married in the U.S., Paula sent me a painting as a wedding present, which now hangs in my bedroom. I have returned to see Paula's family every two to four years during the past 14 years, sometimes for non-research visits. The trust that has developed between Paula and me over the years is based on the research model of reciprocity that Smith requests be an explicit part of the research design. I have reciprocated by bringing Paula's work much attention in academic circles, bringing gifts to her family members, paying for lessons, leaving her my paintings upon request, returning year after year, bringing her videotaped

interviews in draft form for her perusal, feedback, and personal archives, and translating articles into Spanish before publishing and rewriting them based on the responses of Paula, her husband, and her oldest daughter. The answers to the questions that Smith asks above came to the fore every day as we worked. They are apparent in our mutual esteem for each other as close friends and colleagues, as evidenced by our familiar conversations infused with humor throughout the lesson.

In the video, we are just beginning our painting and discussing what to include. The large white paper, the same size as the canvas, is the sketch paper. But instead of re-sketching, as I had been asked to do as a North American college student, we rework very little. Because it is a sketch that emerges from our imaginations, it does not require drawing from observation, so I do not feel the need to be exact. I do not know how Paula feels, but I believe Paula is pleased with the image because the theme of friendship is new for her. And I am pleased because we are representing our theme symbolically. Although pleased for different reasons, we are both very excited about our collaborative process. We then use the sketch to transfer the image with carbon paper to the white gesso-coated surface of the canvas. The purpose of this canvas-sized paper is to avoid the smudges that would occur as a result of drawing with pencil directly on the canvas. Instead, we are left with a very thin blue carbon line that delineates the outline of the images in the painting.

Throughout the beginning drawing stages, Paula and I are negotiating curriculum. The negotiating is a critical component of indigenous pedagogy. Negotiation and indigenous teaching are inseparable. She quite often asks me what I think and applies my thinking to our process: we discuss the content of what to paint together, although the cultural lens through which we develop subject matter is Paula's. Because I had worked with her for ten years and knew how both she and other Maya painters begin by choosing a narrative theme to represent the idea of the painting, I chose the narrative theme of "Our Friendship" for this painting. The teaching of how to develop a narrative theme is part of the negotiated curriculum. Once we had agreed on the narrative theme, we brainstormed about developing the content of the painting based on Paula's cultural knowledge and negotiated color choice, composition, and setting. So this deliberation process was both teacher- and student-centered, a characteristic of feminist pedagogy (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1997; Garber, 2003; Ismail, 2012; Keifer-Boyd, 2007; Sandell & Speirs, 1999; Villaverde, 2008) and indigenous pedagogy (Benham & Cooper, 2000; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Mankiller, 2011). This negotiation, based on Paula's guiding the lessons from her position of artistic expertise, illustrates Smith's (2012) recommended *tiaki* mentoring model in which the authoritative indigenous peoples guide the research process, in this case, the curriculum of our painting classes.

Over the past decade, the Maya painters I have interviewed have all emphasized that creating an original narrative theme as the foundation for a painting is the most difficult part of the painting process and precedes its execution. The Maya painters who have mentored me taught me how to create a narrative theme. Creating such a theme is theorizing a part of the curriculum and as such is an important part of their indigenous pedagogy. Chosen from daily life, oral histories, or historical narratives connected to Maya cultures, such narrative themes for paintings are overarching ideas embedded in and illustrated by the story and subject matter of the painting that constitute its overall content. For example, Paula's painting series entitled "My Second Skin" depicts Maya Kaqchikel women's naked bodies tattooed with the woven symbols of their traditional clothing. The narrative theme represents the inseparability of indigenous identity from traditional clothing and the importance of preserving such traditional clothing as reflective of each Maya community. Such narratives are a form of what Smith (2012) terms "Story telling": "Story telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research" (p. 145). Each theme belongs to the painter, and original themes are highly esteemed.

Coming up with a narrative theme is a process that germinates organically. Paula and I spent much time together during the summer. We visited many of her sisters' homes, spent hours in the family art supply store, spent days laughing in her kitchen while making lunch, and attended school events with her children. I traveled with her to engage in a new family business and made videos about her paintings. I also taught her family how to chant with me. (I am Buddhist.) In other words, we spent time as family members who don't see each other as often as they would like, so we took particular advantage of the moments we had together,

enjoying them completely.

Original narrative themes for a painting emerge out of such life experiences embedded in the Kaqchikel culture and shared on a daily basis. The night before we began the painting, we visited Paula's sister, Adelina Nicho Cúmez, who happened to show us the Maya calendar on the Internet, where we explored the glyphs associated with our birthdays, which are called *nahuales*. Assigned to you at birth, your *nahual* influences your character. Each *nahual*, with its qualities and tendencies, is an important animal to the Maya (Paula Nicho Cúmez, personal communication, 2012). The narrative theme for this particular collaborative painting developed from our discussion with Adelina and our mutual desire to celebrate Paula's and my friendship.

To represent our friendship, we decided to depict specific glyphs in the Maya calendar and the animals and natural scenes associated with them. The glyph symbols are based on narratives that we use to inspire our iconography. As we work together in the video, we refer to Paula's booklet about Maya glyphs so we can paint them accurately. Paula is not familiar with the specifics for drawing each glyph from memory, but is eager to research the process so that we might integrate them into the painting. As we discuss the meanings of the glyphs, we each read sections of the Spanish booklet about the natural phenomena associated with their symbolism. Our process involves research and deliberation, a new approach for us, since in the past we did no research. Through a brainstorming process and consensual decision-making, we come up with the idea that the canvas will depict our lives with all the connections among the imagery representing our friendship.[2]

As evidenced in the videotape of our class session, Paula questions me until she is satisfied that she understands what I have in mind, a true collaboration rather than an example of a teacher-as-expert model in which the teacher hands down ideas to the student. Our relationship in teaching in this Kaqchikel painting studio is of paramount importance because her trust in me and mine in her, along with our friendship, inform our choices for image-making. Her desire to include my input, praise my suggestions, and apply them to the task of painting thus continues to illustrate a collaborative, cooperative model, an example of both indigenous pedagogy and feminist pedagogy.

As part of the Maya resurgence movement in Guatemala (Warren, 1998; Del Valle Escalante, 2009), artists are attempting to depict traditions, oral histories, and Maya ceremonies in their paintings to keep traditions, family histories, and cultures alive. Therefore, artists are also in a position to be asked by cultural outsiders what longstanding histories and traditions mean, and in some cases, contemporary painters are attempting to inform themselves about these issues as they paint and talk about the meanings of their paintings. This reclamation is an example of Smith's (2012) indigenous project of "Celebrating survival—survivance" that "accentuates the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity in resisting colonialism" (p. 146).

Another example of such reclamation is the work of Paula's sister Adelina Nicho Cúmez, a painter, scholar, and university professor, who now works for the Cultural Ministry of Education and designs bilingual curriculum to integrate Maya languages into curricula so that young students might learn the Native languages once spoken in their homes, such as Tz'utuhil and Kaqchikel, languages that the Spanish invasion sought to destroy. A resurgence of bilingualism is taking place in many Maya communities across Guatemala in elementary and middle schools. For example, Paula's children are studying how to speak Kaqchikel in school, although they can understand their parents' use of it in the home.

In the video, as we begin to sketch out the painting, we are in the process of researching the design and color of the various glyphs that we choose to represent our friendship. Paula's questioning me rather than telling me what we ought to include resembles a feminist model of teaching,

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2. Any further explanation of the symbolism of the glyphs in this painting is culturally taboo. Smith (2012) refers to the importance of protecting, an example of indigenous research

> concerned with protecting peoples, communities, languages, customs, and beliefs, art and ideas, natural resources and the things indigenous peoples produce. The scale of protecting … can be as real as land and as abstract as a belief about the spiritual essence of the land. Every indigenous community is attempting to protect several different things simultaneously. … The need to protect a way of life, a language and the right to make our own history is a deep need linked to the survival of indigenous peoples. (p. 159)

in which the student's input and voice are as important as the teacher's (Butterwick, 2012; Caughie & Pearce, 2009; D'Arcangelis & Huntley, 2012; Keifer-Boyd, 2007; Manicom & Walters, 2012; Sandell & Speirs, 1999). As we are immersed in this work together, Paula's husband, Salvador, approaches us to see the beginnings of the sketch. She explains that we have decided to paint the theme of our friendship and to include Maya glyphs to represent it. In the video, Paula shares our ideas with her husband, and as she explains the ways that we came up with the narrative theme, she praises my suggestion. Salvador's participation in the collaborative creation of new artistic knowledge connects to Eldridge's (2008) synthesis of some of the principles of indigenous research, such as "inclusive decision-making, mutual respect, the participation of indigenous people and [the] acknowledge[ment] and respect [of] indigenous knowledge systems" (p. 43). This interchange among Paula, Salvador, and me and our shared decision-making about the painting process are inextricably connected parts of the research process that includes pedagogy, interviewing, collaborative painting, and creating the video.

As we continue in the drawing stage, and as I watch Paula, sitting by her side, I am able to ask her how she works on this specific painting with the idea of generalizing from it: "Do you always start using a sketch the same size as the canvas? Do you make all of your paintings in this way?" I then listen as she explains that yes, this is the best way to work, since in this way, smudging is avoided. As far as teaching goes, had I not been Paula's student, taking part in the making of a painting alongside her, I would not have known that this was the process she used. And as for ethnography, the mentoring model is unique in that it offers a dialogic exchange while researcher and consultant (Lassiter, 2005) make something together. Because the ethnographic process is not simply observing and asking, but discussing and participating, the investigation from the insider perspective of a student is less invasive and more informative. This process accords with one of Eldridge's (2008) guidelines for constructing an indigenous research methodological framework, acknowledging the importance of learning experientially in creating knowledge (p. 44). In this way, acquiring knowledge about the artistic process occurs very naturally. As Paula and I work together, drawing side by side, I am learning what the rules for drawing are in a way that respects her expertise as my indigenous guide. I am learning as I go, commending my teacher's ideas, but never assuming I understand them completely. She, too, observes me to understand my color choices and the idiosyncrasies of my individual artistic style. Later, when I edited the video, at the point where I am asking Paula about the carbon transfer of the drawing to canvas, I realized that although I asked questions as both student and researcher, I was often not aware of the intricacies of what exactly was going on in the moment. I was not trying to analyze it because I was "in" it. In retrospect, though, when I watched myself interacting with Paula, the power of mentor-based research once again struck me. As a student I could ask specific questions as they naturally arose, a process that allowed me to informally elicit her method and philosophy of painting, unlike in a formal interview.

As we move from drawing to painting in the video, Paula gives me oral instructions, which I follow. I begin the painting, and then she moves in to correct. Again, the teaching takes place from a learner-centered vantage point in which I do not feel confined as I did in my formal college painting lessons where color palette was limited and subject matter obligatory. Although here, too, we are using representational color and a prescribed coloring-in of shapes, the structure of these parameters motivates me because I do not feel disconnected from the narrative of the painting as I did in school. I believe this is an example of what indigenous scholars Deloria and Wildcat (2001) describe as indigenous education:

> [I]t is experience that shapes indigenous education and necessitates the awareness of self as crucial ... for knowledge to be attained.In American Indian metaphysics, unlike the dominant system of Western metaphysics, awareness of one's self is the beginning of learning. (p. 13)

Paula's choice to work on one canvas together tacitly informs me that we are making work that represents both of us. In this way, we enter the pedagogical process with her eliciting my knowledge rather than depositing information, although I still rely on her guidance. In such a relationship, teacher and student engage in a sharing process that

builds the confidence of the student (Belenky et al, 1997). Painting alone feels risky, since I am not positive about what Paula expects; but gradually I learn as she changes my colors, redraws here or there, or gives me explicit directions. In these moments, when confronting my own need for directed instruction to be sure I was doing it "right," I became aware of my 'self' as the product of a diminishing educational system that had failed to acknowledge the authenticity of my voice. For example, in the video, although Paula asks me to paint the serpent white, she notes that I may disagree and therefore asks me to pick another color. Later when she gently makes changes, I do not feel diminished or belittled as her student. This trial and error process clarifies what Paula wants me to learn and also convinces me that I possess an authentic voice.

Because we are painting in her home, birds chirp, music plays, food is cooked, laundry is done, dishes are washed, and children come home for lunch. One of my older paintings hangs on the wall behind our easel, a gift I left for Paula, one of several that ends each summer's painting sessions. I was surprised when after our first summer of lessons and three collaborative pieces under our belts, Paula asked me to make a painting in my style and leave it for her. This request honored my identity as an artist in my own right and was a teaching strategy in which the teacher supports student initiative by shifting the power dynamic to the student's and teacher's reciprocal learning (Belenky et al., 1997; Garber, 2003; Keifer-Boyd, 2007).

My voice-over in the video explains Paula's collaborative and consensual teaching and learning: "This was a sharing experience. Life and relationship were at the heart of this learning, which took place with community at its center." Salvador and Paula's children charted our progress. Therefore, the painting experience was not isolated, not private, but shared by the entire family. Smith (2012) refers to "representing" as "a project of indigenous artists, writers, poets, film makers and others who attempt to express an indigenous spirit, experience or world view" (p. 152). For me, this indigenous worldview was represented not only on the canvas, but also in the family's shared collaborative artistic process. Collaborating on a canvas was a unique and lovely experience for me, as was collaborating indirectly with the larger family, who commented, suggested, and complimented.

Paula's daughter Delia, a high school student who lives at home, conducted the videotaped interview, a strategy that comes out of a collaborative ethnographic research model (Lassiter, 1998, 2005) in which participants become "consultants" who contribute to research questions, research agendas, and outcomes that benefit indigenous participants' lives (Lassiter, 1998, p. 8). Delia asked completely impromptu questions about what she found interesting. Her interview was a welcome moment for Paula and me, an opportunity for both of us to talk about our experience. In much of our work together, Paula had been talking about her paintings while I interviewed, so this was a unique chance to share our perspectives as artists and friends who had worked together for many years.
In addition to editing the video, a reflective process, I realize that revisiting the video later also provided me with multilevel opportunities for reflection, asking how Paula's and my definitions differ, both about artistic processes and the generation and ownership of ideas. While watching the interview, I noticed that when asked about our techniques, Paula is happy to give broad responses, such as "oil on canvas" and "palette knife." I, on the other hand, feel the need to detail the steps we took from beginning to end: brainstorming the narrative theme, sketching, painting, and finally explaining that many of these techniques are new for me. Watching myself, it seems to me that my compulsion to enumerate every task comes from my education, which insists that art be taught in compartmentalized exercises and steps.

Also, I was intrigued when I perceived a novel definition of originality. When I said to Paula that she came up with the idea of *nahuales* to represent our friendship, she said that no, we had come up with the idea together because I had liked her idea very much. This definition differed markedly from my own. Paula clearly felt that collaborating on an idea could mean agreeing about someone else's idea and supporting it by positively responding to it, whereas I was trained to think that if it's her idea, it's hers; if it's my idea, it's mine. With my Euro-American cultural background, I never thought that the support of an idea could be considered part of its generation.

I end the video with the interview because this ending mirrored the conclusion of our painting experience together. Our dialogue provided our reflective review of the project and our emotional attachment to a

mutual objective, our collaborative painting. Coming up with a collaborative narrative theme is unheard of for the Maya male painters with whom I worked. I know Paula and her painting collective painted on parts of a canvas together, but coming up with a theme is usually an individual act. So Paula and I had broken the mold in this respect. Therefore, it seemed fitting that the end of the project would include a collaborative reflective dialogue about the project. Her daughter's idea to interview us was the right ending for this work. At the end of our video, Paula emphasizes that our experience is significant because as two women painters who shared this special collaboration and as friends from different backgrounds and cultures, we were able to harmoniously create something beautiful based on our mutual understanding of the language of art, not only a technical understanding, but also a symbolic language representative of our friendship in images with private and cultural meanings.

Paula also felt compelled to emphasize that she sought her husband's permission to paint this theme that she would not sell or exhibit publicly. She stated that this painting is only for the home. Acknowledging that Delia, her painting student, had the unique idea of our signing our painting with our names in Maya epigraphy, Paula showed that she considered her teenage daughter to be worthy of adult respect. This respectful attitude paralleled her attitude toward me. Because relationship is paramount in teaching, and Paula taught her sisters and daughters to paint, my work as a female painter at her side in her home was more familiar to her than to me.[3] But quickly convinced of its warmth and efficacy, I felt nurtured and protected as a student in this environment. Finally, Paula ends the interview commenting that we are both painters participating in a collaborative and valuable partnership that has produced intercultural knowledge. Instead of enumerating the details, Paula savors the bigness of our experience: "There came a rainfall of ideas based on our united imaginations; it was the experience that we shared that made this work important and beautiful."

Conclusion

Smith (2012) takes the project of sharing a step further than Paula, clarifying that "[s]haring is a responsibility of research" because the dissemination of its results should bring collective benefits (p. 162). In our case, there are two kinds of dissemination. Paula and I disseminated the results of our work together in the video. After editing the video in an attempt to represent the entire lesson, I posted on YouTube, temporarily with private access for the family and planned to edit according to Paula's input. Delia took Paula to the Internet café to watch the video. Paula approved of the sequence of edits and my Spanish translation of the voice-over. Additionally, I am also disseminating the results of the research and our work in this essay, which I have also translated into Spanish for Paula's approval before publication, keeping in mind Smith's warning that assumptions underlying translation can be problematic and her insistence that sharing should demystify knowledge and address the community plainly.

The collective benefits are also twofold. The benefits to me are obvious. Paula's work has been the foundation for the majority of my research in art education; thus, her work has directly contributed to my credibility as a scholar and gaining tenure. She has given me of herself in innumerable ways beyond the reach of words. In turn, I have attempted to give back. In the past decade, as I have presented our collaborative work, I have helped to initiate travel for Paula to promote her work and her philosophy, teaching, and artistry both nationally and internationally, and I have used my grants as stipends to pay Paula over the years. I have left Paula with 100-plus hours of videotaping over ten years that belong to her, as they tell her family story and can be used to publicize her work. Before publishing my articles, I have hired a professional translator to

3. Maya Kaqchikel and Tz'utuhil painting apprenticeship models can take on many forms in the two Guatemalan towns, San Juan de Comalapa and San Pedro La Laguna, where I have been mentored. In many cases, male painting teachers take on students who are not family members, but of course if family members want to learn, they will teach them. In the case of Paula, there are few female painters, and two of the people she taught were her sisters, but others from the only Maya indigenous women's painting collective are women when Salvador Cúmez Curruchich, Paula's husband, also taught and Paula encouraged along. In the case of the Pedrano painters from San Pedro, recently, husbands have been teaching their wives, who work on the husbands' paintings as apprentices, filling in details. But the wives have now started to receive recognition as women painters in their own right. So generalizations about the structures of painting apprenticeship models are difficult to make.

translate them into Spanish and rewrite them based on Paula's family's response. My purpose in doing this is to give Guatemalan Ladino and Maya readers access to Paula Nicho Cúmez's international recognition. Paula and her family have often said that they truly appreciate the work that we have done together on their behalf.

I have scrupulously listened to Smith's (2012) observations that there are diverse ways of disseminating knowledge and of ensuring that research reaches the people who have helped make it. I have taken very seriously the actions of "reporting back" to the people and "sharing knowledge," both of which involve the principle of "reciprocity and feedback" (p. 16). I have also done my best to make sure our sharing of knowledge is a long-term and evolving commitment, respectful of the cultural protocols of indigenous research methodologies. Nevertheless, as Smith warns, "assumptions behind the research focus" must always be examined (p. 180). Thus, in my work as a researcher, I am charged always with examining my intentions, making sure that my spirit remains clear. Currently, my intentions, welcomed by Paula, are to bring her to the United States as an artist-in-residence and find both university and urban galleries to exhibit her work so she can expand her collector base and find consistent financial support for her ongoing career as a world-renowned painter. In this way, the power dynamic between us can be used to benefit her. Finally, to maintain the integrity of this lifelong ethnographic work, I must continue indigenous research protocols that emphasize the relational processes of sharing, collaboration, and dissemination that bring collective benefits.

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