

but she goes on to explain in detail the government's employment pay grid, in effect minimizing the role of systemic gender bias in her analysis. Similarly, Nemiroff's observation that all four female directors of the gallery have had PhDs leaves the reader to explore on their own the implication of the unstated fact that none of the male directors have earned this credential. Despite such quibbles, the impact of this text on our understanding of the evolution of the National Gallery in these key decades is profound. This is an important book, and the successes and failures that Nemiroff lays bare make for essential reading for anyone interested in Canada's artistic heritage or in institutional leadership. We can only hope that future Directors of the Gallery will consider it required reading.

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1. See Bruce Barber, Serge Guilbaut, and John O'Brian, eds., *Voices of Fire: Art, Rage, Power, and the State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

Stephanie Springgay
Feltness: Research-Creation, Socially Engaged Art, and Affective Pedagogies
Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022

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Laura Ryan

Through repeated touching, felting locks together individual fibers to create a new material. Stephanie



Springgay uses the process of *felting* as a metaphor for her proposed pedagogy of feltness, which calls for collaborative, intimate, and tactile modes of arts education. Springgay argues that affective, interdependent, and experiential projects can *felt* a class(room) into a restorative space of learning, yielding unanticipated learning outcomes.

Springgay's book *Feltness: Research-Creation, Socially Engaged Art, and Affective Pedagogies*, threads this concept of feltness through a series of case studies of generative arts prompts posed to elementary through to postsecondary students. In one instance, elementary schoolers were asked to paint blocks of colour onto narrow wooden panels roughly two feet tall. They spiked these "colour bars" into the sand of a Toronto riverbank, creating a horizontal row of bright color along the shoreline. The students then photographed these bars with their peers, situating them within the Canadian landscape. In doing so, the students asserted their own relationship

with the land they occupy by visually inhabiting it. The project taught the students about the *terra nullius* myth of much Canadian landscape painting, which has historically often shown the country as uninhabited, while making art that actively disrupted the idea (1–2). Another prompt, offered to secondary and university classes, asked students to listen to one of their peers give a presentation in a language most of the class did not speak (121). In one iteration, students listened to their Indigenous classmate lecture in Cree inside the classroom, prompting an experiential and affective confrontation with settler dominance in education (146). These research-creation prompts and the events or projects they generated are discussed alongside other similar projects to form a series of case studies of research-creation at each educational level.

The book comprises an introduction and seven chapters, with sixty-three color photographs of these described research-creation events included in a middle insert. Each chapter offers new examples of *felt* pedagogies and a trove of impressively current supporting theoretical concepts. With frequent reference to Natalie Loveless and Jorge Lucero, Springgay grounds her own work within the growing scholarly movement affirming art as a worthy and potentially transformative mode of education. The text certainly succeeds in its effort to affirm the value research-creation as a productive educational process—a process that is valuable because of its difficulties: its incompatibility with current education and its need for

responsible, care-full, perhaps felt implementation.

The introduction places research-creation within its neo-liberal educational context. Research-creation is now a well-known term made commonplace by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and used Canada-wide to secure grant funding. SSHRC defines research-creation as “an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation.”¹ This category allows researchers to propose projects without fully determined learning outcomes, projects that will discover and disseminate knowledge through the process of creation. However, as research-creation functions within the extant capitalist academic system, research-creation can also institutionalize these purportedly transformative educational arts projects (6, 17). Springgay argues that past pedagogical projects have not actually disrupted this system and that to do so they “must expose the violence of settler colonialism and anti-Black racism in order to create more just and flourishing worlds” (19). She states that it is only through care, social justice, and resistance that research-creation becomes radical. With this message of socially engaged, affectively oriented research-creation established, much of the rest of the text moves around the author’s own research-creation project, *The Pedagogical Impulse*, which is an ongoing

two-part project funded by two SSHRC grants (2011–14 and 2016–20).

In its first iteration, Springgay arranged artist residencies at Toronto K-12 public schools. During these placements, artists produced research-creation projects with elementary school teachers and students. Chapter One features the residencies of participating artists Hannah Jickling and Reed Reed, which value the input and analysis of grade-six students, often overlooked as knowledge producers. During one such research-creation, *Ask Me Chocolates*, students made and traded chocolate candies (31). Most students who participated in *Ask Me Chocolates* were students of colour from newly immigrated families (36). The project empowered these often-marginalized students to trust their own tastes, which they did by expressing their dislike for dark chocolate. In a structure repeated throughout the book, Springgay enumerates the positive results of these projects and warns against their mobilization for disingenuous ends. Springgay notes that such socially engaged and participatory arts are often only performatively disruptive of established power structures (43).

Chapter Two covers secondary school research-creation residencies that Springgay facilitated. Using the 1960s UK-based Artist Placement Group’s (APG) notion of an “open brief” (59), Springgay invited research-creation projects by artists Hazel Meyer, Rodrigo Hernandez-Gomez, and Sarah Febraro, to be open-ended and without predetermined, measured outcomes, setting aside the common and

predetermined procedural approach to education that she critiques in the text at large. The second and more recent iteration of *The Pedagogical Impulse* involved university class studies of, and responses to, pedagogical arts collective projects.

Chapter Three assesses the pedagogical precedence of Fluxus artists from the 1950s to 1970s, including their happenings and Fluxkits which, along with *Proposals for Art Education from a Year Long Study* (1968–69), inspired the *Instant Class Kit* of Chapter Four. Curated by Springgay, Vesna Krstich, and other collaborators, the *Instant Class Kit* is “a mobile curriculum guide and pop-up exhibition of fourteen [newly commissioned] contemporary art projects dedicated to radical pedagogies and social justice” (113). This kit performs counter-archiving, or anarchiving, which Springgay defines as a repository that is actively used, spurring new relationality between and beyond its contents (118). Three of these kits were mailed between North American classrooms. Projects including Jickling and Reed’s *Tacky Forms*, which asked the students to chew raw gum materials and remark on their taste, teaching through embodied activity (124). The responses to these projects and their relationship to *feltness* are the subject of Chapter Five. It is within this chapter, “Conditions of Feltness,” that Springgay adds significantly to the scholarship and theory of touch (138–9). She shows that working with non-digital art and handling a physical art object in the classroom inspires trust and responsibility in students, prompting doing rather than observing (140–43).

Chapter Six discusses artist Shannon Gerard's research-creation course, *Pressing Issues*, run at Ontario College of Art & Design University (OCADU), in which students created educational artist's multiples with and for a public audience after studying from pedagogical arts archives at OCADU and in Los Angeles. While the "diverse publics" sought out for these events were arts-related and thus less public than those of the APG, the research-creation events and archiving of this class—as assessed through their art—appear to have been highly fruitful. The decision to include one semester's final nano-published project (posters entitled *Counter with Care*, after Corita Kent's *Handle with Care*, 1967) within the kit for the next class enacts the forward-looking doing that Springgay asks of socially engaged research-creation. As the author also notes, this course, like many inventive approaches, has flaws that stem from its radicality. Not all of the OCADU students could travel to LA to visit arts archives, making the course exclusionary for the same reason it is innovative (169).

Concluding in Chapter Seven, Springgay discusses changes she made to her office, such as giving students access to the room when she is not on campus, as an example of how we as educators can "shift the ways in which we approached reading and studying in the academy—as something solitary and typically assigned in course work—to a practice of intimacy" (172). This practical example, like so many of the research-creation events described within *Feltness*, offers educators clear

suggestions for a more *felt* method of education. And, as with the OCADU course, these suggestions have also already found their own barriers to widespread adoption. Springgay has shown that by refusing to establish expected learning outcomes in advance nor provide quantifiable evaluative criteria such as rubrics, as is the normal educational practice, research-creation is "imponderable" to neoliberal educational administration.

As *Feltness* is a culmination of over a decade of Springgay's work, the scope of the content she presents sometimes gets in the way of showcasing *felt* as a method. I found this most often with her returns to care as a core value of feltness, which could have been developed further in its own right (130, 144). Chapters are largely organized around new examples of research-creation, which are afterward connected to current pedagogical theory, and then to feltness. With this structure, the concept of feltness and its many theoretical underpinnings read secondary to research-creation as a pedagogy. Also, the small, already intimate, size of elementary and university seminar courses eases the touch-based, collaborative, and process-oriented learning Springgay describes. The author does not comment on the application of feltness in large university lecture courses, where many students are introduced to art history and arts education as a field, and where active learning is often most challenging to implement. This is one of many possible future research areas supported by this book. *Feltness* offers a strong new work of affective-pedagogical

literature with which we can catalyze future socially engaged projects and validate ever-more disruptive grant applications.

Springgay's *Feltness* is a guiding resource for educators looking to implement or justify research-creation with respect to the social justice that such radical pedagogy can either foster or simply perform. The book makes a compelling case for the benefits of research-creation, educating as an artist-teacher, and the need to keep both practices affective and socially engaged.

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1. "Definitions of Terms," Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Government of Canada, updated May 4, 2021, <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-finance-programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22>.

Dana Claxton and Ezra Winton, eds.
Indigenous Media Arts in Canada: Making, Caring, Sharing
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In *Indigenous Media Arts in Canada: Making, Caring, Sharing*, editors Dana Claxton and Ezra Winton present a comprehensive look at landmark artworks and events within Indigenous moving image, film, and television in Canada. The book is divided into four main sections: "Decolonizing Media Arts Institutions," "Protecting Culture," "Methods/Knowledges/