Understanding Self-Documentation

A Thesis

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by

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Things keep their secrets.

Heraclitus,
Fragment 10

But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?

Job 28:12

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> I feel, my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed. I therefore wish to impart to you this sudden change in myself.
>
> *Moral Letters*
> SENECA, 65 AD

Home from Spain with my master's, I applied for PhD programs and then, my memory still full from jamón ibérico, had application after application denied. Eventually, Drexel was the last school I had yet to hear back from, and it was over a month after they'd promised a decision. Supposing I wasn't cut out for academia, I began considering any number of Plan B's. Then I got an email from Dr. Deborah Turner gauging my interest in a research project she was heading. I wrote back immediately. But not too immediately. "Dear Deborah," I said, "I'm so happy to hear from you." If only she knew. She changed my life before we ever met, and she helped me a hundredfold since. Deborah, perhaps more than anyone else, shaped my research, and so she is the first one I have to thank, at the other end of this journey. Deborah, thank you for our long talks, even on your busy days, and for all the laughs. Thank you for putting up with my impetuousness. I'm grateful we had the chance to go through all the joys and travails that happen when two people work together for years.

I remember a day in my first quarter at Drexel when I left Deborah's office with two names written in my notebook: Kiersten Latham and Jenna Hartel. Deborah had suggested I read some of their work. Fitting, then, that in my final quarter at Drexel I write their names again here, in this consummate notebook. Kiersten, I can't help but think I've pulled you beyond the call of duty on countless occasions. Your reassurances assuaged my Move-to-Wales-o-Meter time and time again. I have to thank you, too, for bringing me into the Document Academy fold. I look forward to a long and storied friendship. And Jenna, I am likewise grateful to have you in my

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When I was starting my doctorate, I remember reading people's acknowledgements sections, with their profusions of names, and wondering if I'd actually have

anyone to thank when the time came. Somehow I had the idea that a dissertation was something a person wrote on their own. Clearly that is not the case. So I'm leaving Drexel changed, which I suppose is the idea. In some ways it seems a sudden change, like Seneca's, and yet I can't quite say how or when it happened.

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Some of the ideas in this dissertation have been published in journals. They are listed here, in order of appearance in the dissertation.

The arguments regarding art and documentation made in §2.1.3, along with related portions of §4.1.3, are found in Gorichanaz, T. (2017). Understanding art-making as documentation. *Art Documentation, 36*(2), 191–203.

The discussion of understanding in §2.2.1 is found in Gorichanaz, T. (2017). Applied epistemology and understanding in information studies. *Information Research, 22*(4), paper 776.

The paragraph on unit of analysis in §3.2.4 is found in Gorichanaz, T., Latham, K. F., and Wood, E. (2018). Lifeworld as "unit of analysis." *Journal of Documentation, 74*(4), 880–893.

Some of the verbiage on generalizability, validity and reliability in §3.6 is found in Gorichanaz, T. (2017). Auto-hermeneutics: A phenomenological approach to information experience. *Library and Information Science Research, 39*(1), 1–7.

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Abstract

Understanding Self-Documentation
Timothy John Gorichanaz
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Documents pervade modern life, and the nature of these documents influences the way we understand and engage with reality. Among these documents are ones we create about ourselves, as evidence of some aspect of the self—such self-documentation is increasingly salient. This dissertation is a phenomenology-of-practice study of one form of self-document: the artistic self-portrait. I situate this study within information behavior, document theory and philosophy of information. Epistemologically, I foreground the concept of understanding. I address four research questions in all, two conceptual and two empirical. First, I conceptualize the self-portrait as a document. I find the essence of the self-portrait to be "pulling oneself outward over time," manifest in the artwork's making rather than the finished product. This leads into the second research question, in which I conceptualize the making of a self-portrait as a kind of documentation. What results from this analysis is a model of documentation from the first-person perspective, which shows the Document as it shifts over time, guided by a Foundation and facing Obstacles. To illustrate this model, in the third research question I interrogate the informational nature of the lived experience of self-portraiture by analyzing examples I collected with seven local artists. In the final research question, I address the building of understanding through self-portraiture, finding that both self-understanding and understanding of the artistic process are built; I discuss how these are reached through the integration of multiple pieces of information. In discussing these findings, I explicate how this research extends the reviewed literature, and I reflect on the successes and failures of this study. To close, I speculate on ethics, suggesting that self-portraiture can be a site for free expression and a way to contribute to the ontic trust, unlike some other forms of self-documentation. Lastly, I

return to the issue of self-documentation more broadly, pointing toward opportunities for further research.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At City Hall in Philadelphia, you can become a monument. Seven feet tall, two pedestals stand in the courtyard, bearing only the inscription ME. Visitors can ascend by ramp at the rear and then, once atop their pedestal, look out over the crowd... and smile for the camera. The installation, *Two Me* by Mel Chin, exposes the tension between individualism and coexistence in contemporary American culture (Mural Arts Philadelphia, 2017). In the crowd, throughout the city, indeed all around the world, people are taking photos of the sights—and, of course, themselves. It's something we're growing accustomed to, such that we rarely stop to ask: *What is going on?*

To begin with, we're making documents. Doing so is a hallmark of modernity. We create documents, and then we come to rely on them, and now it is through documents that we understand reality (Buckland, 2005; Floridi, 2013). Among these documents are ones we create about ourselves, as evidence of some aspect of the self, a phenomenon I refer to as *self-documentation*. We are compelled to write resumes and CVs, we build personal websites and online profiles for socializing, commerce, dating and education, and we snap selfies with abandon.

Of all the genres of self-documentation, the selfie is particularly notable. Over the past decade or so, it has become ubiquitous. For the uninitiated, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *selfie* as a self-portrait made with a smartphone camera (Selfie, 2016). Evidence of the importance of the selfie abounds: Oxford Dictionaries (2013) named *selfie* the international Word of the Year in 2013, citing a 17,000 percent increase in usage over the previous year. In mid-2016, Google reported that over 24 billion selfies had been uploaded to Google Photos in the prior year (Sabharwal, 2016). The social networking apps Instagram and Snapchat largely facilitate the circulation of selfies; as of December 2017, there are over 328 million posts explicitly tagged as *selfie* on Instagram. And until May 2017, the most shared post on Twitter was a selfie taken and posted by Ellen Degeneres at the Oscars in 2014, which was shared over 3 million times

Figure 1.1: *Two Me,* by Mel Chin

(Roman, 2017). What's more, statistics for selfie-related deaths are being collected and reported (Cohen, 2016). If only for its ubiquity, the selfie begs consideration.

In both popular and scholarly discourse, the selfie has already been described as a kind of document. The Selfie-A-Day smartphone app has been described as a way to "document your life one selfie at a time" (Shaul, 2014), and the daily-selfie concept has taken hold as a way to "document" life circumstances, from domestic abuse (Velez, 2014) to weight loss (Abrahamson, 2016). Mark Fischetti (2014), writing in *Scientific American*, describes the act of taking a selfie as a form of documentation, comment-

ing that in today's world it seems "we're living to document our lives" (para. 5). A Tumblr-based research project by artist Adam Mathieu is titled *The Selfie Document* (*https://selfiedocument.tumblr.com*). In information science, Brian O'Connor (2014) has commented on how selfies as documents sit within the history of photography and play a role in mediating public knowledge.

In these discussions, it has generally been assumed that the selfie is related to artistic self-portraiture. As noted above, the selfie is defined as a type of self-portrait. In the view of visual theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff (2015, p. 31), the selfie "expresses, develops, expands and intensifies the long history of the self-portrait." Mirzoeff sees the selfie as a digital, networked outgrowth of this artistic tradition.

Though there has been substantial academic and popular comment on the selfie (see §4.1.4), its connection to the self-portrait does not seem to have been probed. Rather, this connection has been accepted as self-evident, to the extent that, for example, Rembrandt's self-portraits are being described as selfies (e.g., Sooke, 2014). More recently, the Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy presented the exhibit *Veterans Empowered Through Art: The Six Week Selfie Project*, which involved museum tours and workshops and included sketches, complete self-portraits, poetry and personal photos (Huynh, 2017).

But is a selfie really a type of self-portrait? If so, why the different term? Could it be, rather, that reducing the selfie to the self-portrait masks the deeper nature of both phenomena? There is some suggestion that this may be the case: A blog post published by the J. Paul Getty Trust asks about the difference between selfies and self-portraits, concluding that selfies and self-portraits differ along the dimensions of creative intent (self-portraits being decisively crafted, while selfies may exhibit less forethought) and ephemerality (self-portraits are meant to last, while selfies are disposable and replaceable), and that they involve different cultural contexts and interpretations (Stephan, 2015). This blog post, however, does not go into much depth. To answer the question of the relationship of the selfie to the self-portrait more completely, it is first necessary to understand what is meant by *self-portrait*. As it turns out, the nature

of self-portraiture likewise does not seem to have ever been seriously questioned.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *self-portrait* as "a self-made portrait of oneself" (Self-portrait, 2016). And yet, as art historians Laura Cumming (2009) and James Hall (2014) remark, the depictions in self-portraits do not necessarily *look* like the artist. For example, if the dozens of self-portraits of Rembrandt are considered as representative depictions, they seem to represent different individuals (Cumming, 2009). Artists sometimes even depict themselves in situations that either never happened or could not have been remembered (e.g., their birth or death) (Cumming, 2009). How, then, is *of oneself* to be understood?

If not yet plumbed, the question of self-portraiture has begun to be posed. Hall (2014) argues, for example, that "one of the most crucial aspects of the history of self-portraiture is understanding why and when self-portraits are made—and not made" (Hall, 2014, pp. 9–10). The question of *how* self-portraits are made has been addressed to some extent by art historians through the lens of history, but it also deserves attention at the level of the individual work-in-progress. After all, as Cumming (2009, p. 24) writes, "Self-portraits often raise the question of their own existence"; but as Hall (2014, p. 32) notes, "A finished self-portrait tells us little about the visual 'source' for the likeness." Howard Becker (2003) remarks that studies of art have tended to focus on the finished products of art rather than the processes, inviting study in the process of creation of self-portraits.

Here the question can be asked of whether a self-portrait is a document. Even if we accept that a selfie is a document and a kind of self-portrait, it still does not follow that a self-portrait is necessarily a document.[1] However, self-portraits, too, have been considered documents, again in both popular and scholarly discussions. In the popular media, artistic self-portraits have been said to "document one artist's struggle with disease" (De Santis, 2015), another's "psychological journey of grieving

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[1]This may be clearer when put in syllogistic form. The following syllogism is not valid:
 Premise 1: All selfies are self-portraits.
 Premise 2: All selfies are documents.
 Conclusion: Therefore all self-portraits are documents. (Not valid)

death" (Crowe, 2014), and yet another's "journey into adulthood" (Petrikovic, 2016). In academic work exploring artistic self-portraiture in occupational therapy, career development counselors Redekopp, Day, and Magnusson (1995) refer to self-portraits as "living documents" (p. 2). So it seems that self-portraits can be considered documents as well as selfies, but self-portraits do not seem to document the same phenomena, or in the same way, as selfies. The details of this remain to be teased out, which is one of the purposes of this study.

In this dissertation, I clarify the nature of self-portraiture in order to provoke wider and broader studies on self-documentation. The artistic self-portrait seems a suitable place to begin this inquiry because of its longstanding cultural importance: "[Self-portraits] have often been in the vanguard of cultural developments, influencing their own society's sense of identity and selfhood" (Hall, 2014, p. 11). An account of the "traditional" practice of artistic self-portraiture can thus provide a foundation for further research in self-documentation.

Though information science has dealt little with fine art or artists, it provides an ideal disciplinary setting for the investigation at hand because of its robust toolkit for studying the products and processes of other disciplines, including the arts (Bates, 1999). Moreover, as research situated in information science, this study contributes meaningfully to information science theory and development: As novel documentary forms proliferate and our society becomes more visual, we must better understand non-textual documentary forms. As such, this study engages with the conceptual and metatheoretical foundations of information science and documentation, with an emphasis on heuristic value.

Conceptually, I position this study at the intersection of artists' information behavior and the concept of understanding. I begin with a review of the relevant literature (Chapter 2) divided into two sections corresponding to these areas. First, I review the literature on art in information behavior and document theory (§2.1). I begin with a philosophical argument for why information science must contend with art (§2.1.1), and then I move on to review the research in information behavior on art and artists

(§2.1.2). Next, I make the case that document theory is relevant to art and presents a bridge to information behavior through the concept of information creation (§2.1.3). In my review, I find that the few studies which consider art-making informationally suggest that, for artists, working with information is not a problem or task to be overcome, but rather an act of understanding.

But what is understanding? This is the main subject of the second section of the literature review (§2.2). I review the literature in philosophy and information science on the concept of understanding and propose a framework for conceptualizing understanding as a phenomenological, information-based epistemic aim (§2.2.1). I find understanding to be an experiential concept, and one that can be thereby linked to the budding research areas of information experience and document experience, which I then review (§2.2.2). Implicit in understanding and experience is the self, which forms the last topic of the literature review (§2.2.3).

Springing from this literature review, I begin Chapter 3 by explicating the four research questions that are addressed in this study. These questions build on each other progressively, beginning with the product (the self-portrait) and moving into the process (self-portraiture). These questions are:

RQ1 What sort of document is a self-portrait?

RQ2 How can self-portraiture be conceptualized as documentation?

RQ3 What is the nature of the lived experience of self-portraiture?

RQ4 What understanding is built through making a self-portrait, and how?

Next, I discuss my metatheoretical (§3.2) and methodological (§3.3) approach, and then I detail the conceptual (§3.4) and empirical (§3.5) methods I use to address my questions. A discussion of research quality follows (§3.6).

I then present my findings (Chapter 4). In response to RQ1, I offer a philosophi-cally-informed discussion of the self-portrait and the selfie as document genres (§4.1).

In short, the essence[2] of the self-portrait is in the experience of its making. To discuss this making in further detail and to respond to RQ2, I develop a first-person model of documentation, which is suitable as a heuristic tool for exploring experiences of information creation, including, but not ultimately limited to, self-portraiture (§4.2). Next, responding to RQ3, I move to empirical examples of lived experiences of self-portraiture as a way to illustrate and extend the model I developed in response to RQ2. The narrative examples can be found in Appendix A, while in §4.3 I present a number of themes that characterize the experience of making a self-portrait based on these examples, which include communicating, taking breaks and stepping back, tension and relaxation, and more. Lastly, in response to RQ4, I describe some of the understandings built in the creation of a self-portrait, which include understanding the artistic process and the self (§4.4). Beyond describing understanding in this domain, my response to RQ4 gives a method for analyzing understanding in terms of information.

In Chapter 5 I discuss these findings. First, I reflect on how these findings contribute to the literature I reviewed (§5.1). Next, I offer some speculation on self-documentation and ethics in light of these findings (§5.2). I suggest that self-portraiture is a site for free expression and stewardship. Finally, in §5.3, I reflect upon the successes and failures of my study, opening the door to further research.

To conclude this dissertation (Chapter 6), I return from the realm of the self-portrait to the wider issue of self-documentation for some final thoughts.

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[2] *Essence* is sometimes understood as an ahistorical, transcendent spirit that precedes all particular examples (i.e., a Platonic form). On the contrary, when I use the word *essence* throughout this work, I mean the spirit that arises from specific examples (Ferraris, 2013, describes this distinction). I find Luciano Floridi's (2013, p. 116) definition consonant: "The specific nature (essence) of an object x consists in some attributes [at a given level of abstraction] that (1) x could not have lacked from the start except by never having come into being as that x, and (2) x cannot lose except by ceasing to exist as that x."

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

> People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them; poets, musicians, etc. to give them pleasure. The idea *that these have something to teach them*—that does not occur to them.
>
> *Culture and Value*
> LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, 1939

In this chapter, I survey the literature framing my study of the information of self-portraiture. I begin, drawing mostly on literature in the philosophy of technology, by discussing how art is a technology and can be used in knowledge-generation (§2.1.1), as Wittgenstein implied in the above quotation. This offers one argument for studying art in information science.[1] I then proceed to the information science literature. There have not yet been any studies on self-portraiture in information science, but there has been some relevant work on art in information science, including information behavior (§2.1.2). Still, most of this research has been limited to information seeking. To account for art-*making*, of which self-portraiture is an example, we must link information seeking to information use and creation. I argue that document theory offers one way to do so (§2.1.3). I also argue that a fully satisfactory account of art-making must contend with first-person experience. However, document theory, like information behavior, has for the most part been developed from the third-person perspective. To move toward the first person, I explore the budding research areas of information experience and document experience (§2.2.2). This link involves two additional concepts: understanding (§2.2.1) and the self (§2.2.3). Based on this review, in the next chapter I present the research questions and methods of my study. A fuller discussion of first-person-perspective methodology is given there, in §3.2.4.

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[1] Aware of the debates surrounding this term, I use *information science* to denote the broad field of study that is otherwise variously known as information studies, the information sciences, library and information science, documentation, bibliography, etc., in recognition of the fact that this work has been done under the aegis of the Department of Information Science at Drexel University.

2.1   ART AND DOCUMENTS

There have not yet been any studies of self-portraiture in information science. Since the self-portrait is an artistic genre, a reasonable starting point for such a study is to review the literature on art and artists in information science.

I begin by supporting the position that art is technology and needs to be studied in information science, since information science is in principle concerned with technology, broadly construed (§2.1.1). I then survey the research in information behavior on art and artists (§2.1.2). I identify an opportunity to apply document theory to further research in this domain (§2.1.3).

2.1.1   Why Art

Eugene Garfield (1989) wrote about the art–science connection, observing myriad ways in which art and science overlap. For instance, Garfield remarked upon the structural similarity between the work of artists and scientists: Both may be impatient with social niceties, both work in relative solitude, both are driven by curiosity, both engage with nature, both present their work to the outside world, and the work of both will eventually fade.

Even so, information scientists rarely seem to consider art (Garfield, 1989). When art *is* considered in information science, it is predominantly only in terms of its communicative potential and aboutness for the purposes of classification (Day, 2008; cf. Smiraglia, 2001). This overlooks not only the cultural importance of art, but also its relevance to information science (Day, 2008).

There are several reasons for information science to contend with art. First, art presents a rigorous test case for theories of classification and meaning, given the nonverbal nature of its workings, and thus it can provide a critical perspective to information science (Day, 2008; Goodman, 1976).

Next, information science is concerned with the production and circulation of understanding throughout society, a view that dates back to the work of Egan and Shera (1952), and so art ought to be studied in information science insomuch as art

contributes to a society's understanding. Though art may not always contribute to what we generally define as knowledge (i.e., justified true belief), as artworks cannot always be said to be "true," they may contribute to understanding. Catherine Elgin (2002, 2017b) argues that evidence for this is found in how art challenges assumptions and furthers inquiry in other fields. Jochen Briesen (2014) further conceptualizes this as art's capacity to provoke new perspectives on a phenomenon, which is a central part of understanding. The concept of understanding will be discussed further in §2.2.1. Other fields, such as media studies, have recognized art as a form of recorded human knowledge and called for the development of literacies around it (Mirzoeff, 2015). Further research into art from an information perspective can contribute to these efforts. Moreover, this work has the capacity to bring art back into the realm of everyday life, as discussed variously by Ellen Dissanayake (1992), Michel Foucault (1997), Martin Heidegger (1971, 1977) and Roger Scruton (2014). These scholars assert that, while today art sits on an "experts only" pedestal, this has not always been the case, and indeed art *works* best when it is integrated into a people's everyday life experience. Heidegger's argument in particular is detailed below.

And finally, because information science is concerned with technology (Bawden & Robinsin, 2012) and art is a form of technology (Heidegger, 1971, 1977), information science should contend more fully with art. The notion that art is a form of technology is worth reflecting upon. What *is* technology, when it comes down to it? This question has been considered since the birth of philosophy, but a particularly revelatory exploration is given by Heidegger (1977), who is considered by many to be the foremost philosopher of technology of the 20th century (Borgmann, 1987; Franssen, Lokhorst, & van de Poel, 2015).

Heidegger (1977) plumbs the definition of technology in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology," challenging what he sees as the overly superficial accounts of other scholars and the popular culture. For an example of an accepted definition of the time, sociologist Read Bain (1937, p. 860) defined technology as "all tools, machines, utensils, weapons, instruments, housing, clothing, communicating and transporting

devices and the skills by which we produce and use them." A more recent definition is given by W. Brian Arthur (2009, p. 28), who defines technology as "a means to fulfill a human purpose." Heidegger anticipates even this more recent definition, arguing that, if technology is a means, then it is a kind of cause, and all causes bring things into appearance. Thus, for Heidegger, technology is, at its root, a way of revealing—of bringing some potential of the world into unconcealment. In coming to this conclusion, Heidegger discusses the Ancient Greek word *techne*, which is a root of our word *technology*. According to Heidegger, *techne* (i.e., making in the sense of doing or following some process) was related to both *poiesis* (i.e., making in the sense of bringing forth) and *episteme* (i.e., knowledge or understanding), all of which Heidegger sees as ways of revealing. *Poiesis* becomes an important concept for Heidegger, as will become clear below. To offer a little more detail: This word comes to us as the root of our word *poetry*, and it has been defined by philosophers Dreyfus and Kelly (2011) as the skill of making meaningful distinctions through acting as part of the world.

Heidegger (1977) is particularly concerned with exploring what makes "modern" technology stand out. Indeed, in common parlance, we tend to consider technology as "anything that wasn't around when you were born," as computer scientist Alan Kay observed (Greelish, 2013, para. 2), forgetting about the true breadth of technology. Heidegger concludes that, though both *techne* and *poiesis* characterize technology in general, modern technology is lacking in *poiesis*. This is an important point in what Heidegger characterizes as the danger of modern technology, because modern technology has changed the way humans relate to the world. In Heidegger's view, humans can relate to the world in two ways: first, as *belonging*, or understanding or being-in-the-world, which involves recognizing that for all that is revealed, much more is left unrevealed; and second, as *enframing*, or representational thinking, which involves seeing only what is revealed and forgetting that there's anything else. That is: in the pork, we lose the pig; in the lumber, we lose the forest; in the schedule, we lose time. Heidegger argues that modern technology compels enframing; thus we come to see things only for their instrumental resource value, and voraciously we amass these

resources as *standing-reserve* for the sake of personal gain. Moreover, we come to see ourselves and each other as resources, too: in the Facebook page, we lose ourselves.

Heidegger (1977) suggests that, in enframing, humanity itself is direly threatened. But all is not lost just yet: he believes that further interrogation of technology may reveal a solution—in particular, technology wherein *techne* and *poiesis* are still both found together and which is conducive to inciting questioning: that is, art. "Yet the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 341). However, in another essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger (1971) worries that, because of the perniciousness of enframing, we tend to see art itself as standing-reserve. Heidegger (1971) laments the aestheticization of art—that is, its being relegated away from the realm of everyday living and into museums and galleries. Heidegger (1971) argues that aestheticization divests art of its power to cultivate belongingness. For Heidegger (1971), art works when it is woven into the fabric of life, where it illuminates what people find worthwhile and true (e.g., everyday pottery in Ancient Greece); consequently, it informs their understanding of the world and themselves. Not only does art illuminate the worthy and true, however; art constitutes it (Heidegger, 1971). As described by commentator Hubert Dreyfus (2005), art has the power to revolutionize and usher in new cultural paradigms.

So what is art? As described above, Heidegger (1977) defines art as a technology wherein *techne* and *poiesis* intermingle. To be sure, *art* has been defined in many different ways. The earliest theories of art hinged on its representation, likening art to imitation, and later accounts of art hinged on its beauty, and still later accounts rejected any reliance on representation or beauty (Cauquelin, 2012). Novelist Leo Tolstoy, in his book *What Is Art?* (1897/1996), defines art as anything that expresses emotion. This, more or less, seems to be congruent with modern definitions of art, as it emphasizes art's processual nature (Becker, 1982, 2003) and its inextricability from the people who engage with it (Genette, 1997; Johnson, 2007). Practically speaking, there may always be those examples whose status as art is questioned (e.g., Marcel

Duchamp's *Fountain*) and those whose status is taken for granted (e.g., Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*).

2.1.2   Art in Information Behavior

Information behavior is the field of study concerned with human action related to information (Bates, 2010; Ford, 2015; Wilson, 2000). Researchers in information behavior were once chiefly concerned with scholarly and work-related information behavior; however, they have since recognized "everyday life" information behavior as worthy of study (Savolainen, 1995). Scholars have come to recognize also that information behavior is not just involved in life's problems but also in positive and pleasurable situations (Kari & Hartel, 2007), and conceptualizations of what qualifies as information have also broadened (Bates, 2005, 2006). In this clime, the information behavior in any number of human roles and contexts has come to be studied, including that of diverse professionals, citizens, hobbyists, patients, students, immigrants and more (Case & Given, 2016).

In information behavior, there has been some work on artists. Susie Cobbledick (1996) was the first to directly explore artists' information seeking, in an interview study of four faculty artists. Since her work, a number of other researchers have contributed; William Hemmig (2008) provides a review of this literature, drawing the following conclusions:

- Artists seem to require information for five distinct purposes: inspiration, specific visual reference, technique, marketing and art world trends.

- Artists frequently need information on subjects unrelated to art, so art libraries rarely serve them well.

- Like information behavior in general, creative information behavior is idiosyncratic.

- Artists have a strong preference for visual information.

As relevant to my discussion here, a notable contribution in the literature is that of Sandra Cowan (2004), who was the first to conceptualize artists' information seeking outside the confines of the library, in a hermeneutic-phenomenological case study. Cowan interviewed one practicing artist and uncovered five main sources of information in art-making: the natural environment, the work itself, relationships with one's own artwork and with other artists and works, self-inquiry, and attentiveness. A key observation Cowan makes is that the artist does not view her art-making as involving information seeking or needs; rather, it is a joyful process of dialogue and perception. Cowan remarks that the artist's "processes are fluid, interrelational, dynamic, and *creative*; they rely on the action of creating understanding, rather than finding pre-existing information" (2004, p. 19, emphasis hers). Cowan is one of the first information behavior researchers to point out "creating understanding" as an activity; this concept is explored further below.

In his review article, Hemmig (2008) remarks that there has been almost no study in information behavior of artists who were not also faculty or librarians. He then conducted such a study (Hemmig, 2009), which validated his findings drawn in 2008. After Hemmig, there have been a few studies of artists' information behavior. The first is by Gérard Régimbeau (2009) (whose other work in the documentation tradition is discussed below, in §2.1.3.3), presenting a framework for considering the information behavior of artists. Régimbeau's framework entails the concentric circles of world, networks and apparatuses, which comprise the mediations of various actors. Régimbeau (2009) draws largely on the sociological work of Becker (1982), who flattens the ontology of the "art world" into a complex cooperation among many people (manufacturers, couriers, shop owners, gallery owners, critics, etc., in addition to the artist). With this in mind, Régimbeau (2009) argues that a univocal analysis of art-making is necessarily insufficient; a scholar cannot simply consider particular masterpieces or mediums in isolation, but rather they must consider the complex network of interrelations that underpin the creation of any work of art.

Second, Mason and (Lyn) Robinson (2011) surveyed recent graduates from art

school to determine whether their information needs differed from established artists; they found that, except for a slightly higher emphasis on career guidance, there was no difference. Their results reiterated that artistic inspiration is found from a very diverse and idiosyncratic set of sources, often by serendipitous means.

Third, Shannon Robinson (2014) explored the information seeking of contemporary Egyptian artists in an interview study with eight participants. She deductively applied Hemmig's (2008) framework of information sources in her analysis and found evidence of each of them. She notes, however, that the Egyptian artists face additional burdens to information access compared to American artists, given the perceived limitations of Egyptian libraries; her findings also emphasize how artists rely on personal connections during information seeking.

Finally, there has been some recent research on information seeking in artistic domains beyond visual fine arts (e.g., painting), including music (see Lavranos, Kostagiolas, Martzoukou, & Papadatos, 2015), theater (e.g. Olsson, 2010) and writing (see Desrochers & Pecoskie, 2015). Because this study is focused on the information behavior of artists as it applies to self-portraiture, these contributions are not reviewed in depth here. However, it is notable that, like the research on visual artists, these works also limit themselves to information seeking rather than creation and use. Additionally, there has been some research on information literacy instruction for art students; Katie Greer (2015), for example, discusses some additional references outside the information science scholarly literature which corroborate my discussion here, though her chief aim is addressing information literacy issues.

Though this body of research offers a coherent view of artists' information behavior, it only addresses information needs and seeking, rather than use or creation. The lack of research on artists' information use is a crucial limitation in light of Cowan's (2004) finding that artists may not view themselves as information needers and seekers, but rather as understanding-builders.

Indeed, this critique can be levied against information behavior research in general. As Case and Given (2016) declare, after an extensive synthesis of the literature:

> Despite an effort to examine the fuller context of information behavior, much of the research still comes down to "who or what do people consult for advice?" This is an old question within the information needs, uses, and seeking literature that continues to dominate the discussion of findings. (Case & Given, 2016, p. 346)

This prognosis is supported by a number of other researchers, including Raya Fidel (2012), Nigel Ford (2015), Pertti Vakkari (1997) and T. D. Wilson (1997). Based on this, there seems to be ample room for research on the creation and use components of the information–communication chain,[2] and art is certainly a domain in which such research can be done.

To this end, an additional study emerges as relevant, which was not reviewed by Hemmig (2008) and appears to be disconnected from the rest of the literature discussed here. It is the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Tonyia Tidline (2003), who conducted a narrative analysis of the information behavior of artists. Tidline found that artists see their chosen medium of expression as significant and that engaging with other artwork is an important part of the creative process and artists' development. Principally, Tidline sought to provide evidence for the informativeness of art. In light the work surveyed thus far, this proposition now seems to be secure. In her conclusion, Tidline called for further research on how artists work with information in art-making. To date, her call has not been answered.

2.1.3 Art and Document Theory

Research on artists' information behavior, including creation and use, can draw from document theory. As will be discussed below, document theory offers a way to conceptualize information creation and use. Moreover, art objects can be considered as documents.

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[2]Robinson (2009) reviews the literature on this concept, noting that since the 1960s it has variously been referred to as the *information chain, the communication chain* and the *information life cycle*. All three terms seem to have proponents, and different authors offer different conceptualizations, independent of the term used. I will not debate these terms here; following Robinson, I adopt *information–communication chain*.

2.1.3.1   Document Theory

The word *document* has roots in the Latin *docere*, meaning *to teach* or *evince evidence*, which implies that a document is something used in teaching or supplying evidence (Lund, 2009). Documents, identified as such post facto, may always have been a part of human society (Buckland, 2005; Sokolov, 2009). However, the concept of the document[3] only arose in legal discourse in the 17th century (Lund, 2009). Progressively it transcended the legal domain, with academic theorization about the document beginning at the turn of the 20th century (Lund, 2009). This began with Belgian lawyer and bibliographer Paul Otlet (1934), whose work set the stage for 20th-century developments in information science (Rayward, 2014). Otlet understood the document as a representation of the world that was composed of facts and could be stored in a centralized system for later retrieval. A key aspect of Otlet's view of the document is that it sits within a classificatory system (Day, 2014b). Seen in this light, documentation was a matter of describing and organizing documents so that they could be brought to users, as described by Brian Vickery (1978). Ron Day (2016a) considers Otlet's view as an example of logical positivism, which is a theory of knowledge that considers meaningful only that which is externally observable and formulable into verbal propositions (Creath, 2014).

Otlet's (1934) view was challenged by Suzanne Briet (1951/2006), a French librarian. First, Briet expanded the set of things that could be considered documents. Whereas for Otlet the exemplary document was a book (he conceptualized the document as *Le Livre*, i.e., *The Book*), Briet exemplified the document with an antelope: Briet argued that an antelope, once put in a zoo, could be considered a document, as it provides evidence of its speciation and place in taxonomy. Second, Briet shifted the defining characteristic of the document from factual representation to indexical reference. Briet thus defined the document as a physical index that represents, reconstitutes or proves a phenomenon.

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[3]Following the convention in Francophone documentation studies, I use *the document* to refer to the conceptual entity and *a document* or *documents* to refer to specific documents.

As Day (2009) points out, the operative word here is *index*. Indexicality, or the indexical mode of reference, is a concept from Charles Peirce's theory of semiotics, and it refers to a relationship between two entities that can be exemplified by pointing (Chandler, 2007; Peirce, 1998). For example, smoke "points" to fire; smoke is an index for fire (Chandler, 2007). An index implies the interpretation of a human, and indexical signs are culturally and spatiotemporally situated (Chandler, 2007). Thus, in Briet's view, documents were not necessarily objective proof of external things, but rather associations drawn by human interpreters. In shifting the definition this way, Briet suggested that documentation was not self-evident—and indeed that it was documentation that defined the document—and she emphasized the role of the human in performing documentation by situating an object within a broader infrastructure. This view has been carried forward; for instance, French documentologist Jean Meyriat (1981) highlights the centrality of the human to the document:

> The document is not inherent, but rather the product of a [human] will, either to inform or to be informed—the second, at least, being always necessary. If this will doesn't bring the person to do something, the information remains only potential. The object on which the information is written or inscribed is not yet a document. It becomes one when a question is asked of it and its information is activated. (Meyriat, 1981, p. 54, translation mine)

Also important to Briet's (1951/2006) conceptualization of the document and documentation was the capacity for secondary documents to be derived from any given primary document, enriching the notion of the classificatory system a document is part of:

> For example, an antelope of a new kind has been encountered in Africa by an explorer who has succeeded in capturing an individual that is then brought back to Europe for our Botanical Garden. A press release makes the event known by newspaper, by radio, and by newsreels. The discovery becomes the topic of an announcement at the Academy of Sciences. A professor of the Museum discusses it in his courses. The living animal is placed in a cage and cataloged (zoological garden). Once it is dead, it will be stuffed and preserved (in the Museum). It is loaned to an Exposition. It is played on a soundtrack at the cinema. Its voice is recorded on a disk. The first monograph serves to establish part of a treatise with

> plates, then a special encyclopedia (zoological), then a general encyclopedia. The works are cataloged in a library, after having been announced at publication (publisher catalogues and Bibliography of France). The documents are recopied (drawings, watercolors, paintings, statues, photos, films, microfilms), then selected, analyzed, described, translated (documentary productions). ... The cataloged antelope is an initial document and the other documents are secondary or derived. (Briet, 1951/2006, pp. 10–11)

Briet's (1951/2006) work has been extended by contemporary scholars exploring the ramifications of semiotic indexicality (Buckland & Day, 1997). This has had two major results, which are discussed in the following paragraphs: First, more diverse forms can be considered as documents (Buckland, 2015); and second, formal, pre-coordinate indexing (where keywords and categories are predetermined and a user's search is limited to those schema) no longer dominates (Day, 2014b).

The neo-documentation tradition began in Norway in the 1990s and has expanded globally (Skare, Lund, & Vårheim, 2007; see *documentacademy.org*). Reviews of this literature are provided by: Lund (2009) in the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*; Lund and Skare (2010) in the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*; and Shankar, Hakken, and Østerlund (2016) in *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*.

Prominent among these scholars is Michael Buckland, whose landmark 1997 paper "What is a 'Document'?" brought the work of Otlet (1934) and Briet (1951/2006) to a wider audience. Buckland has since built on Briet's work, developing a theory of the document as anything that involves meaning, material and culture (Buckland, 2007). This tripartite view of the document is shared by Niels Windfeld Lund, though he has used the terms *individual/mental/information*, *physical/technology*, and *social/socioeconomic* (Lund, 2004, 2007). It is also shared by the collective of scholars in France that publish under the name Roger T. Pédauque; they speak of the material trace (physical), a text conveying meaning (mental) and a medium that manifests relations (social) (Pédauque, 2003). More recently, Buckland (2015) has argued that the status of being a document is attributive (by individuals or social groups) and that every document

has cultural, media type and physical aspects, such that spoken language, music and live performances can also be considered as documents in themselves. Indeed, virtually anything can be considered as a document from a semiotic perspective, even if it was not expressly produced to be a document: According to Buckland's (2015) most recent typology, documents can be created as documents by the maker (e.g., a legal contract), considered as documents by groups (e.g., the Liberty Bell), or made into documents by individual beholders (e.g., an outwardly unassuming object of personal significance).

This expansion of the document also constitutes an advance in our understanding of classification (Day, 2014b). Briet's (1951/2006) assertion that an antelope could be a document was novel, but still her antelope-as-document was embedded in traditional modes of classification, such as zoo and museum catalogs. As information technology has moved toward post-coordinate indexing (where categories are not determined beforehand by an indexer, but rather are determined by the user, as in keyword searching), the document has come to be defined not by formal, explicit classificatory schemes but by informal, implicit associations (Day, 2014b). Thus documentation is no longer something done only by experts,[4] but by—and to—everyone (Day, 2014b). Briet perhaps had this in mind when she referred to humankind as *Homo documentator* and called documentation a necessary cultural technique for modern life, but it is modern technology that has finally enabled the realization of her vision because of the widespread availability of information technology (Day, 2014b).

Taking the above into account, the document can be defined as a physical embodiment of human meaning that provides evidence (Buckland, 2015). A document references something outside itself and is part of a broader system (Briet, 1951/2006). Moreover, when analyzed critically, a document also discloses how it references (Day, 2014b).

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[4]Incidentally, Jesse Shera (1966, p. 72) referred to documentation as "librarianship performed by amateurs."

2.1.3.2 Documentation as Information Creation and Use

For the purposes of studying self-portraiture, the concept of the document seems particularly useful because of its inclusive framework (it incorporates the physical, social and mental). Moreover, the document has long been a subject of inquiry in information science. As described in §2.1.2, information behavior researchers have begun to recognize a need to study information creation and use. In this section, I will show that these questions have been explored within document theory.

In a review article, Shankar et al. (2016) point out that such consideration is part of a broader trend across the social sciences that seeks to understand phenomena in terms of their social embeddedness rather than as isolated objects, other examples of which include Bruno Latour's (1992) actor-network analysis of "a few mundane artifacts" and Brown and Duguid's (2000) sociological analysis of documents. Within the tradition of modern document theory, Bernd Frohmann (2004) has been notably informed by this trend, arguing that documents should be examined in their use—in physical spaces, within organizations and situated in history.

To this end, the empirical perspective of document work (Trace, 2007, 2016) has emerged with the aim of empirically accounting for the myriad ways in which documents form and are used in a given setting. To offer a few examples, research in the tradition of document work has explored the manifestation of racial identity in Apartheid in South Africa (Kosciejew, 2015), information practices involving wedding planning (McKenzie & Davies, 2012) and classroom reading in Sweden (Lundh & Dolatkhah, 2015, 2016).

Some perspectives within document theory have argued explicitly for a focus on document creation (Lund, 2004, 2009). Since the birth of the documentation studies program at the University of Tromsø in Norway, Lund (2004, 2007, 2016) has argued that the greatest insight into a document can be gleaned by investigating the process of its creation, what Lund calls documentation. Within the tradition of document theory, this perspective can be traced back to the seminal work of Briet (1951/2006), since whom the process of documenting is seen as a constitutive part of a document itself.

This is supported by anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2012) view that scholars of culture in general have long tended to emphasize finished artifacts over their processes of creation; Ingold argues that objects should always be approached as having histories.

Lund (2004) conceptualizes documentation in this way: Documentation entails a producer, a set of instruments (including media) for producing, a mode of using these instruments, and the resulting document. This process unfolds in time and is constrained and enabled by any number of factors, from socioeconomic pressures to individual whims (Lund, 2004). Some of these factors are readily apparent upon inspection of the document, while others can only be discovered by looking at the documentation process (Lund, 2004). Using this basic framework, Olsen, Lund, Ellingsen, and Hartvigsen (2012) present a model for the design of sociotechnical systems based on document theory. Their model sees (a) agents who, by certain (b) means, create certain (c) modes of (d) resulting documents. Each stage of the creation process (a, b and c) includes a mental configuration, a social connection and a physical construction, all of which are embedded in the final result (d).

Documentation has to some extent been linked with research and concepts in information behavior. Documentation could be considered a form of information creation, as it results in new information in the form of documents (Trace, 2007), and as a form of information use (Kari, 2007, 2011), as the creation of documents requires some information to start with. These topics have recently emerged as areas of scholarly interest within information behavior, as described above.

2.1.3.3 Applying Document Theory to Art

Though some research has been done on artists' information behavior, for the most part this has yet to benefit from the body of work in document theory, as recently attested by Marc Kosciejew (2017). There is an opportunity to specifically conceptualize artwork as document, and art-making as documentation, and consider the attendant ramifications. Kosciejew (2017) argues that this is the case because art is both material and informational, and document theory allows for both these aspects to be

investigated whereas traditional conceptualizations in information science overlook the material. In my view, connecting artistic information behavior with document theory is particularly useful given that art-making is a kind of information creation, and documentation offers a grounding for the study of information creation, as described above.

A few scholars *have* begun to discuss how artwork can be documentary. This work comes from scholarly discussions on art documentation. In art documentation generally, Anders Ørom (2003) points out the scholarly paradigms and discourses embedded in the organization of artwork at the levels of classification systems, documentation and exhibition. Building on this, Régimbeau (2013) interrogates the values laden in the classification systems we use, arguing that since the Middle Ages the classification of art objects has been subject to the head–hands bifurcation that is insufficient for dealing with contemporary art. Régimbeau (2007) argues that documentalists should consider not only the art object's "content," but also critical analyses, popular discourse, historical trends and more. Such *analyse documentaire* [document analysis] is both interpretative and descriptive, and it engenders synthesis (Régimbeau, 2007). To this end, but independently of Régimbeau's work, Irene Lopatovska (2016) has begun to consider how art objects can be classified according to affect tags rather than merely their aboutness.

To speak of studies in documentation more relevant to human information behavior, Philip Auslander (2006), for one, problematizes the documentation of performance art by discussing what he calls "theatrical documentation":

> In the theatrical category, I would place a host of art works of the kind sometimes called "performed photography," ranging from Duchamp's photos of himself as Rrose Selavy to Cindy Sherman's photographs of herself in various guises ... in which performances were staged solely to be photographed or filmed and had no meaningful prior existence as autonomous events presented to audiences. (Auslander, 2006, p. 2)

Auslander (2006) goes on to draw an account of how performance art and its documentation co-constitute each other. Auslander seems chiefly interested in how performance art and its documentation co-constitute each other, but his work exposes

something deeper: Whereas documents of performance art are traditionally or naively understood as proof of the performance that transpired, these theatrical documents firmly assert themselves as works of art in themselves. Next, Anne Bénichou (2010) discusses some examples of contemporary plastic art that blur the boundary between art and document. For instance, the "test pieces" by Eva Hesse were originally made as sculptural sketches or experiments; as such, they serve as documents for finished pieces (e.g., providing a model for preservation and restoration). But some of these test pieces approach "finished" status, and moreover many of them are now exhibited on their own as artworks in themselves.

Auslander (2006) and Bénichou (2010) stop short of arguing that all art-making is essentially a kind of documentation. This is because they seem to conceptualize the document in a somewhat Otletian (1934) way, seeing the document only as, fundamentally, directly representative of a work of art—even if, in the case of Auslander, that work may not actually exist, and in the case of Bénichou, they may be one and the same.

These views can be advanced by incorporating the neo-documentalist perspective of the document as semiotic. Kiersten F. Latham (2012) moves toward such an account in her framework for considering museum objects as documents, drawing on Briet (1951/2006) and Buckland (1997): Museum objects are material, collected, deemed meaningful and wrapped up in cataloging and other processes (Latham, 2012). Even accepting Latham's argument, it could be argued that would-be museum objects are no longer documents outside the museum setting, and so some further consideration may be necessary to secure the view that art, in general, is documentary.

However, given Buckland's (2014, 2015) more recent conceptualizations of the document, it is clear that the status of being a document is attributable even outside any formal institution; moreover, any document may provide evidence of any number of things. One scholar who has applied such a perspective to artwork is John Walsh (2012), who presents a study of religious icons as documents. Through a historical and theological discussion, Walsh explores how the icon functions as a document:

The icon bundles text, image and material, and it references other icons, theological teachings and cultural events (Walsh, 2012).

Building on Walsh's (2012) work, I contend that all art can be considered a document, and all art-making documentation. Artistic works perform documentary reference in interesting ways. For example, if we consider the theatrical documents discussed by Auslander (2006) to be artistic works in themselves, what they really document is the artistic truth that the trust we may place in documents may be misguided. If artworks are conceptualized as documents in the neo-documentalist sense, there are a number of implications that will have to be explored.

Of course, in a superficial way, all artwork obviously provides evidence that it was made and therefore evinces the skill of the artist, but the document in the neo-documentalist sense is deeper: What chains of reference do artworks manifest? How do they cohere and propagate meanings? In what sense do they function as evidence? If we can answer these questions, we will have a deeper appreciation for the epistemic place of art in human life.

So far in this chapter, I have explored the relevance of art to information science, surveyed the research on the information behavior of artists, and suggested that the application of document theory to art may be fruitful because art-making can be conceptualized as a form of documentation and consequently information creation. This provides grounds for further study on the self-portrait as a particular form of artwork-as-document. One finding of the research on artists' information behavior, as noted above, was that artists seem to consider their work as a matter of seeking and engaging with understanding rather than information or knowledge (Cowan, 2004; Goodman, 1976). This thread will be followed in the next section.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING, EXPERIENCE AND SELFHOOD

Descriptions of the purpose of information science typically refer to the concepts of information and knowledge (see Bawden & Robinsin, 2012, Chapter 1). To be sure, these aren't the only possible epistemic concepts. As we saw in the previous section, it

was suggested by Cowan (2004) that artists are concerned with understanding. This assertion has been echoed by philosophers, such as Elgin (2002, 2017b) and Johnson (2007). Moreover, information scientists with interests outside art have also begun to turn their attention to understanding (Bawden & Robinson, 2016a, 2016b).

In this section, I explore understanding as a concept, reviewing the literature in information science and philosophy. Understanding, it turns out, is an experiential concept. Information experience and document experience are budding areas of research within information behavior and document theory, respectively, and it stands to reason that inquiry into understanding should interface with inquiry in these areas. Moreover, the concepts of understanding and experience imply some notion of selfhood; to close out this review, the question of selfhood and technology is reviewed. Thus, whereas the previous section of this literature review focused on the *portraiture* side of *self-portraiture*, this section focuses on the *self* side.

2.2.1   Understanding as an Epistemic Aim

Discussions of epistemology in information science reach back to Egan and Shera (1952). To establish a guiding theory for information science, they developed the concept of social epistemology, which they defined as "the study of those processes by which society *as a whole* seeks to achieve a perceptive or understanding relation to the total environment" (Egan & Shera, 1952, p. 132, emphasis theirs). In the framework of social epistemology, information professionals are tasked with facilitating the acquisition and development of knowledge (Egan & Shera, 1952).

What is called social epistemology today has interests well beyond information science (Floridi, 2002; Van der Veer Martens, 2015). At the same time, the philosophy of information has been developed, chiefly by philosopher Luciano Floridi; and a cohort of scholars in information science have argued that the philosophy of information is an appropriate philosophical system to ground information science and that its implications for information science have yet to be fully explored (Bawden & Robinson, 2018; Floridi, 2002; Hjørland, 2014; Van der Veer Martens, 2015). To this

end, I want to bring together insights from the philosophy of information and recent developments in the field of epistemology on the concept of understanding to frame my investigation of the information behavior of artists.

According to Bawden and Robinson (2016a, 2016b), the concept of understanding in information science was first proposed[5] by Russell Ackoff (1989), in his now-famous pyramid of data, information, knowledge and wisdom (DIKW). In addition to these four terms, *understanding* also formed a level of the pyramid, which Ackoff described as dealing with causal relations. Though Ackoff's model in general has been much-discussed, the concept of understanding elicited virtually no comment in information science (Rowley, 2007). An exception is that of Bellinger, Castro, and Mills (2004), who suggest that understanding should not be its own level, but rather that understanding supports the transition from each stage to the next. This tension reflects the two ways understanding has been explored in philosophy: as *ontic* and as *ontological*[6] (Baumberger, Beisbart, & Brun, 2017). Ontically, understanding can refer to objectual understanding (understanding *x*; e.g., the American Civil War), propositional understanding (that *x*; e.g., that disagreements regarding slavery were a cause of the American Civil War) and interrogative understanding (how *x*; e.g., how slavery was related to the American Civil War), though these categories are debated (Baumberger et al., 2017). Ontologically, understanding refers to the human capacity for understanding (Baumberger et al., 2017). It seems that, unwittingly, Ackoff was describing ontic understanding, while Bellinger et al. were describing ontological understanding.

It is ontological understanding that has historically seen the most attention in both philosophy and information science. John Locke (1690/1995), for instance, plumbed this sort of understanding—the question of how the mind works—in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which influenced David Hume's (1748/2007) *An Enquiry*

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[5]It may be noted, however, that Egan and Shera's (1952) definition of social epistemology, quoted above, makes reference to understanding.

[6]N.B.: These terms are not used in the philosophical discourse on understanding, but I find it a useful framework for organizing the literature. The ascription of these terms to others' discussions of understanding is my own.

Concerning Human Understanding, which forms the basis of our modern view of human cognition (Morris & Brown, 2017). Ontological understanding (as *Verstehen*) was also discussed by Wilhelm Dilthey (1883/1989) in his conceptualization of human science. For Dilthey, understanding refers to a process that employs all a person's capacities and is different from pure intellectual knowing. This concept was developed further in hermeneutic phenomenology by Heidegger (1927/2010), for whom understanding is a contextualized, perceptive and intentional mode of being-in-the-world that entails pursuing projects and engaging with possibility. For Heidegger, ontological understanding is the basis of ontic understanding. This conceptualization of understanding underlies contemporary hermeneutic phenomenology, whose propriety for information science has been espoused by many scholars, including John Budd, Rafael Capurro and Joacim Hansson (Kelly, 2016). Additionally, hermeneutics has been influential in human–computer interaction (Dourish, 2001; Winograd & Flores, 1986). In information science, the hermeneutic perspective seeks to provide an ontological–epistemological account of information processes by interrogating their foundations (Kelly, 2016). Though hermeneutics has long been a minority in information science, it seems to be gaining traction (Tkach, 2017; Vamanu, 2013). As a final note, ontological understanding seems to be the only sort of understanding considered by Floridi in the philosophy of information, and only in the observation that "it seems that knowing requires understanding, or at least that the two are mutually related" (Floridi, 2012, p. 451). However, in light of contemporary discussions on understanding, it seems reasonable to ascribe the label of ontic understanding to the network of question-and-answer accounting that makes a piece of information count as knowledge in Floridi's framework.

Ontic understanding has seen comparatively less interest in philosophy over the past several centuries, but this may be a historical accident (Kvanvig, 2003). J. M. Moravscik (1979) argues that understanding was an important connotation of the Greek word *episteme*, but that word has generally been rendered in English only as *knowledge.* As such, Anglophone epistemologists have ignored ontic understanding

until the late 20th century (Kvanvig, 2003).

One area of philosophy in which ontic understanding has been explored for a longer period (throughout the 20th century) is in the philosophy of language (Baumberger et al., 2017). For example, philosopher-turned-information-scientist Patrick Wilson (1960) presented a doctoral dissertation focusing on ontic understanding in linguistic communication. The main innovation of Wilson's approach was in recognizing all meaning as context-dependent and contingent rather than "stored" in words. This work was later articulated for utility in information retrieval as the concept of situational relevance (Wilson, 1973). Wilson's (1960, 1973) work was extended by O'Connor, Kearns, and Anderson (2008) in grounding a philosophy for information retrieval of non-text documents, but even this extension was limited by its basis in the philosophy of language. For instance, O'Connor et al. (2008, p. 18) give the example of an Afghan song, saying that they would not be able to get "more than a pittance" of meaning from it because of the language barrier, whereas an Afghan would have "all the relevant elements for him to extract meaning in the document." Here they assume that the only meaning a song has is its linguistic meaning. This overlooks the reality that every day millions of people listen, dance and cry to music in a language they do not speak, even music with no words at all (Goodman, 1976; Jackson, 1998).

More recently, ontic understanding has become a compelling subject in epistemology (Baumberger et al., 2017), with some epistemologists arguing that understanding is the rightful object of epistemology, rather than knowledge (Greco, 2014; Grimm, 2012; Kvanvig, 2003, 2005). This is because ontic understanding is seen as epistemically more valuable than knowledge and because the traditional factors defining knowledge (truth, justification and belief) are less problematic when considered as factors defining ontic understanding (Baumberger et al., 2017). However, the precise nature of ontic understanding is hotly debated among epistemologists (just as is, for that matter, knowledge), as reviewed by Baumberger et al. (2017).

Regarding the value of ontic understanding, both Jonathan Kvanvig (2003) and Timothy Williamson (2000) argue that knowledge is less valuable than traditionally as-

sumed, and Kvanvig proposes that ontic understanding is an epistemic aim of greater value. For Kvanvig, ontic understanding is uniquely valuable for two reasons. First, ontic understanding admits of degrees (shades of gradation, rather than the binary of known/unknown) (Kvanvig, 2003). Second, understanding is immune to epistemic luck because it involves a conscious sense-making effort (Kvanvig, 2003). Stephen Grimm (2012) argues that this effort is innately satisfying and goes beyond the mere acquisition of truth (as for knowledge). Grimm suggests that ontic understanding is valuable because it entails a structural model that mirrors the world, and when we have such a model we feel more deeply engaged with the world. In this way, according to Grimm, the concept of ontic understanding accommodates both subjective understanding (e.g., that one's Zodiac sign drives their fortunes) and objective understanding (e.g., that living on donuts alone can lead to health problems) (Grimm, 2012). Thus even if an ontic understanding is not objectively true, it can be satisfying because of the innate human desire to make sense of the world (Kvanvig, 2011).

In this sense, ontic understanding always involves a cognitive achievement, while the same cannot be said of propositional knowledge (Pritchard, 2010, 2014). Linda Zagzebski (2001) describes this achievement in terms of transparency, which also makes ontic understanding more valuable than knowledge: "It may be possible to know without knowing one knows but it is impossible to understand without understanding one understands" (Zagzebski, 2001, p. 246). Philosophers of understanding generally refer to this achievement as grasping (Baumberger et al., 2017). Grasping involves being able to identify how the various elements described by a model are supposed to depend upon, and relate to, one another (Grimm, 2012; Pritchard, 2009; Kelp, 2015). To qualify as ontic understanding, the result of this grasping should be a coherent set of relationships (Baumberger et al., 2017). One outcome of a person's having ontically understood may be their ability to apply generalizations to specific cases (Grimm, 2012).

Contemporary Anglophone epistemologists are generally concerned only with intellectual reasoning, and this has admittedly colored their discussion of understanding

(Grimm, 2012; Kvanvig, 2003). However, there have been some broader conceptualizations of understanding in epistemology. Catherine Elgin (2017a) argues for a holistic view of (ontic) understanding:

> Understanding, as I construe it, is holistic. Suppose our objective is to understand the wrongness of lying. This might mean a variety of things. We might want to understand *why* lying is wrong, or *what makes* lying wrong, or *when* or *to what extent* lying is wrong. These are all legitimate and important questions. But I am after bigger game. I want to understand how lying's being wrong is woven into the fabric of human life. Satisfactory answers to all of the foregoing questions will supply part of the answer but, I suggest, only part. (Elgin, 2017a, p. 83, emphasis hers)

Further, (Elgin, 2002) argues that epistemologists should consider pictorial art, as art often challenges assumptions and furthers inquiry in other fields. Elgin (2002) suggests that, while art may not always contribute to knowledge, it is epistemically valuable in that it contributes to ontic understanding. In her recent book on epistemology, Elgin (2017b) argues that this is because art exemplifies aspects of the world—that is, it makes us notice and consider things that we otherwise wouldn't have. She writes:

> In exemplifying these properties, [art] draws our attention to them and stresses their significance. It thus equips us to recognize them when we see them again and intimates that we would do well to attend to them. In effect, then, [art] may be a source of working hypotheses. (Elgin, 2017b, p. 219)

Jochen Briesen (2014) takes this further. Briesen posits that, as ontic understanding involves constructing mental models, pictorial art must be able to contribute to these models via chains of reference. To construct this account, Briesen draws from Nelson Goodman's (1976) philosophy of symbol systems. Goodman (1976) offers a robust account of how artworks can be conceptualized as semantically and syntactically dense and replete systems which allow humans to trace chains of reference. In art, "familiarity is never complete and final" (Goodman, 1976, p. 260), which is what makes the work of art a site for building ontic understanding. Thus, as Elgin (2002, 2017b) argues, artwork can facilitate understanding by triggering new perspectives. Johnson (2007) has also argued that art can be regarded as epistemic, that all meaning (including intellectual abstraction) ultimately has a biological basis in the physical

human body, that engaging with art thus uses the same meaning-making faculties as any sort of intellectual inquiry, and that art makes an exemplary site for the study of meaning because of the sheer density of its meaningfulness.

Except for the work of David Bawden and Lyn Robinson (Bawden, 2007; Bawden & Robinson, 2016a, 2016b), these recent philosophical developments have gone unnoticed within information science. However, scholars have acknowledged the possibility of epistemic aims besides knowledge in information science (Fallis & Whitcomb, 2009; Rowley, 2006, 2007), and they have recognized that oftentimes the underlying reason people seek information is not simply to acquire knowledge, but to attain something different (e.g., understanding and/or wisdom) (Furner, 2010). Bawden and Robinson (2016a) suggest that the concept of understanding may be particularly useful for information science, given that issues such as information overload have arisen in areas of wide information access and may be due to a lack of understanding and overcome by a cultivation thereof. The concept of ontic understanding helps account for inconsistencies and outdated information in collections, and so it seems to be a better match for the realities of the information professions (Bawden, 2007; Bawden & Robinson, 2016b).

Bawden and Robinson (2016b) and Börje Langefors (1977) envision a future where information systems support understanding. Bawden (2012) suggests that these systems might include diverse modes of information synthesis, thematic analysis and visualization. In order to begin to develop such systems effectively, the field needs a better account of how ontic understanding emerges when humans deal with information (Bawden, 2012). Moving toward this, Bawden and Robinson (2016a) synthesize some of the philosophical literature on (ontic) understanding and attempt to integrate understanding into Floridi's (2011b) philosophy of information, ultimately calling for more research and further conceptualization.

To close this review, I want to articulate a framework of how I see the relationship of understanding to other epistemological concepts discussed in information science. A full discussion of these concepts is outside the scope of this review. My concep-
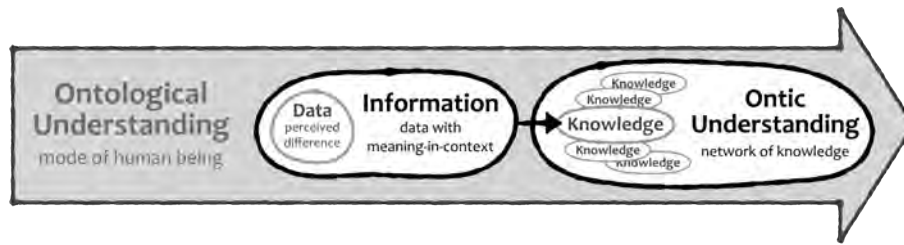
Figure 2.1: Framework of epistemic concepts

tual epistemic framework is illustrated in Figure 2.1 and described in the following paragraphs.

This framework shows ontological understanding, a perceptive and situated engagement with the environment, to be the mode of being by which any intellectual activity is possible. It shows information to be the basis of knowledge and ontic understanding. Here information is defined as a perceived difference (Floridi, 2008) that is bundled with meaning (i.e., action in some sense, as defined by Floridi, 2011b, and Johnson, 2007); the data can be analytically isolated after the fact. Information can become knowledge once it is accounted for in a satisfactory way (Floridi, 2011b); this accounting-for places knowledge within a larger framework of ontic understanding. Ontic understanding is defined as a coherent and self-transparent network of knowledge constructed by a conscious agent. In this framework, information and ontic understanding are developed over a background of ontological understanding. I see this account as consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology and the philosophy of information.

The purpose of devising this framework was to clarify the relationship of understanding to other epistemological concepts in information science. In my view, this was necessary in preparation for a study of information behavior keyed to understanding rather than, necessarily, knowledge, such as that of artists.

As Elgin (2017a, 2017b) implies, any case of ontic understanding involves a wide array of information. Information science has tended to focus on formal information,

such as books and articles. According to Melissa Ocepek (2018), even research in everyday information behavior, which has sought to investigate information phenomena outside traditional information institutions, has been to some extent limited by a priori assumptions about the forms information can take. As Ocepek (2018, p. 404) argues, "Instead of overly relying on traditional information sources and ways of knowing, they can look to narrative, lived experience, and other non-traditional forms of information."

Happily, some scholars have begun to conceptualize a breadth of information phenomena, including experience. For example, Bates (2006) has sketched a taxonomy of fundamental forms of information relevant to information science, which includes genetic, neural-cultural and exosomatic information. More recently, Cox, Griffin, and Hartel (2017) review a corpus of research conceptualizing the role of the human body in and as information. A recent example of empirical research in this vein is the doctoral dissertation of Angela Pollak (2015), who explored informal information behavior in everyday leisure. Pollak found that (ontic) understanding is built experientially, through both dialogue and solitary reflection, based on experiential information. Pollak challenged the view of information as document-based by leaving behind documents entirely. I contend that her work can be extended by accounting for how experiential information and documentary information work together in the building of understanding.

We have seen that understanding is experiential (something done by a conscious agent in a way that is neither outwardly observable nor readily accessible by others) and that information science has begun to recognize aspects of experience as informational. This has manifest, in part, as the research areas of document experience and information experience. In the following section, I will review the literature in document experience and information experience.

2.2.2 Information Experience and Document Experience

Recall that, in document theory, documents are said to have three aspects: material, social and mental (see §2.1.3.1). As reviewed by Buckland (2015) and Lund (2009), document scholars have predominantly investigated the material and social aspects of documents, ignoring the individual human experience of creating or relating to documents. Indeed, most research in information behavior (according to Hartel, 2014b) and information science in general (according to Jacob & Shaw, 1998) has adopted sociocognitivism, which seeks to account for the community- and society-level dynamics of information processes. According to Talja and Nyce (2015), sociocognitivism ignores the texture of individual lived experience because it seeks to account only for the externally-observable and verbally describable aspects of these processes. However, this may lose out on something important. As Norbert Wiener (1954, p. 18) writes, "communication and control [of information] belong to the essence of man's inner life, even as they belong to his life in society."

Indeed, the investigation of understanding, as articulated above, demands attention to individual lived experience. This is tantamount to investigating how people become informed. As Ocepek (2018) points out, information behavior researchers have assumed that merely physically encountering a piece of information constitutes becoming informed. This may not always be the case; as David Tkach (2017) discusses, becoming and being informed is a phenomenological position.

Latham (2012, 2014) notes the absence of the individual's lived experience in document studies. To this end, she has offered a methodology for describing and interpreting human experiences with documents. Latham introduced the concept of *document experience,* drawing on John Dewey's (1934) discussion of the narrative structure of lived experience. In Dewey's view, experiences that are identified as such (and thus picked out after the fact from the flow of existence) always have narrative completeness, and include several aspects: continuity between intra- and extra-experience aspects of existence; deepening complexity as time progresses; meaning even after the experience concludes; challenges encountered; and anticipation of culmination.

Commentator Philip Jackson (1998) suggests that these aspects can be used as analytical tools in interrogating lived experiences. Employing these tools, as well as some work from reader response theory, Latham (2014) proposes the document transaction as the experiential mechanism of the document. The transaction, and thus the document, constitutes "its own thing, a moment that can only exist by the fusion of the person at that moment with the object in that place" (Latham, 2014, p. 549).

Building on this, Daniel Carter (2016) calls for a broader view of document experience that considers how a document's institutional setting affects an individual's experience of that document. Carter points out that Latham's (2014) view of document experience considers a single document without necessarily taking its wider context into account. In Carter's view, documents necessarily function within shared systems (e.g., families, organizations, cultures). Therefore, a holistic study of documents must consider them contextually—or, more precisely, relationally—within infrastructural systems (Carter, 2016). Within these systems, documents are perceived and used in various ways, depending on their relationships with other documents, systems and people, and are situated both spatially and temporally (Carter, 2016).

Lived experience has become a recent topic of interest in information science outside document theory. This research area is known as information experience and was introduced in the edited volume *Information Experience: Approaches to Theory and Practice* (Bruce, Davis, Hughes, Partridge, & Stoodley, 2014). Information experience is understood as the "complex, multidimensional engagement with information" (Bruce et al., 2014, p. 4), with a focus on

> the way in which people experience or derive meaning from the way in which they engage with information and their lived worlds as they go about their daily life and work. This goes beyond how they make meaning from an objective entity identifiable as information, to consider what informs them and how they are informed, encompassing the many nuances of that experience within different cultures, communities and contexts. (Bruce et al., 2014, p. 6)

Bruce et al. (2014) contend that information experience is a necessary area of study because individual users are the ultimate end of information research and develop-

ment, but the experience of these individual users has not always been taken into account in system design and development. Rather, the researcher or professional has traditionally designated what they think is important. "In contrast, assigning centrality to people's information experience allows us to gain insights into what other people consider to be of importance" (Bruce et al., 2014, p. 11). Taking such a bottom-up approach to research and development can reveal previously-hidden phenomena and biases, ultimately improving the end products in terms of usability and utility (Bruce et al., 2014). Indeed, the domain of information experience seems to be a fruitful addition to research in information behavior. Ford (2015) argues that researchers should "produce findings of greater relevance to practice by focusing on information outcomes [including] whether and how information is used, and what impact it has on the user and others" (p. 240). Information experience is well-suited to answer this call.

Bruce et al. (2014) identify information experience as both a research domain (focusing on the context or setting, such as learning or decision-making) and a research object (focusing on experience itself). As a research domain, it offers a broad view of the experience of human engagement with information, and it has been approached through behavioral, phenomenological and sociocultural lenses; through these lenses, things like information literacy and information practice have been studied (Bruce et al., 2014). As a research object, an information experience is a discrete instance of engaging with particular information (Bruce et al., 2014). For example, *what is it like* to experience information in *x* context? Bruce et al. call for more research into information experience as a research object, as it has only begun to be explored.

In sociotechnical research more generally, there has also been a recognized need for more research on lived experience. Jannis Kallinikos (2009) argues that the sociocognitive view cannot account for the differences in local malleability and the immense diversity across different technologies. In some ways, Kallinikos' view seems compatible with actor-network-theory (Latour, 2007), a sociocognitive theory which colors "social processes" as chains of actors acting on each other, regardless of con-

sciousness. However, Kallinikos seems to want to render phenomena in even further detail, arguing that technology is "irreducible to sheer social relations" (2009, p. 293). He gives the example of word processing as an illustration: The difference between typing and writing is not merely a matter of different actions or physical maneuvers, but it also involves the person coming to the task in a different way, prioritizing their possible and actual actions differently, etc. (Kallinikos, 2009). Kallinikos argues that there is something in experience that is not captured in a descriptive account of human–technology relations as mere social relations.

These insights have been discussed for some time in philosophy. In his famous paper "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" Thomas Nagel (1974) argues that "an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like *to be* that organism—something it is like *for* the organism" (p. 436, emphasis his). In Nagel's view, scholars must attain some idea of the nature of what something is like in order for their objective theories (i.e., not bound to a single point of view) to be valid. Frank Jackson (1982) builds on this argument, emphasizing that scholarly interest should lie in understanding what particular experiences are like rather than what it is like to be another organism (which is inaccessible). Concretely, Jackson argues that there seems to be some property of experience that is constitutive of certain phenomena but is left out of accounts that do not consider how the phenomenon is experienced. These discussions constitute but a small part of philosophical inquiry on the nature of reality and consciousness, further consideration of which is outside the scope of my discussion here.[7]

For my purposes, it suffices to note that knowing what something is like may have consequences for understanding that "something" and for developing theories and systems about it. Sarah Worth (2008) has conceptualized this as a form of knowledge she calls narrative knowledge. Worth argues that, whereas philosophers have long recognized *knowing how* and *knowing that* as forms of knowledge, narrative knowledge,

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[7]For an overview, see the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on "Qualia" (Tye, 2016).

derived from story, uniquely constitutes knowledge of what something is like. Though story has long been studied in the humanities, it has been underprivileged—or even unrecognized—in the sciences (Worth, 2008). For Worth, narrative knowledge provides necessary context to traditional scientific accounts of phenomena. Elgin (2017b) discusses concretely how this can be the case; in brief, all knowledge has a perspective, and some knowledge may only be possible to ascertain in the first-person perspective. I discuss Elgin's work and this question more fully in §3.2.4 below.

Based on this discussion, I assert that document experience and information experience should be studied from the first-person perspective to discover the breadth of phenomena contributive to understanding (following Elgin, 2017b) and to not unduly filter out any relevant information from the start (following Ocepek, 2018). This requires suitable methods. Before such methods are outlined, however, it is necessary to briefly explore the concept of the self, as that is where the first-person perspective is situated.

2.2.3 Selfhood and Information Technology

What a person is, and specifically what *the person that is me* is, is one of the enduring questions of philosophy. The question seems to spring from the indubitable sense that there is something that it is like for me to be me, as Descartes famously formulated, which runs up against the wisdom that "the only constant is change" and the real sense I get, as we all do from time to time, when recalling decades-old memories, that I am a different person than I was before.

As Martin and Barresi (2006) detail, selfhood has changed throughout history as humans have moved from tribal, tightly collectivist societies to larger, more diverse and globalized societies. On their account, early on, and for most of human history, the self was picked out in religious terms—people understood themselves as fixed, enduring, God-given selves. Since the 17th century, however, the self has been understood in scientific, social-constructivist and eventually nihilistic terms.

What can be made of these differing accounts? I cannot hope to solve a millennia-

old puzzle here. However, what can be said is that the self is not best understood as a fixed and perduring entity, but rather as an ongoing accomplishment, the experiencing of experience, or self-consciousness. This claim is supported by centuries of philosophy, as well as modern neuroscience and psychology, and which has been adopted in information science. It should be noted, however, that concepts such as human, person and self, while often implicit in information science research, are very rarely conceptualized, as concluded by Sylvain Cibangu (2015) after an extensive content analysis of the scholarly literature.

To start with philosophy, Aristotle first began theorizing the self (or soul) in terms of activity, rather than substance, in *De Anima*. Much later, Hume (1739/2003, p. 180) characterized the self as "a perpetual flux and movement." In the following century, Søren Kierkegaard lay the foundation for modern philosophical accounts of the self when he stated, "The self is a relation which relates to itself... The self is not the relation but the relation's relating to itself" (Kierkegaard, 1849/1989, p. 43).

If the self arises in activity, it is an ever-changing medley of different substances. Kierkegaard's philosophy may be faulted for over-emphasizing personal agency, when in reality our actions are highly constrained[8] by our situations (genetic, epigenetic, microbiotic, emotional, historical, social, etc.). This notion was first popularized through Sigmund Freud's work regarding the unconscious, which has been further developed in today's neuroscientific accounts of the self, such as that of Antonio Damasio. Damasio (2010) draws a theory of the self in which the *protoself*, which arises from neurological patterns in the body and has feelings, is built upon with the *core self*, which has non-linguistic reasoning and subjectivity, and then the *autobiographical self*, which is the language-mediated sense of self that makes reference to both past and future.

Psychologist Rom Harré has also contributed to theorization of the self in pointing out that much of the confusion around the self arises from mixing different senses of the word *self*. For Harré (1998), a *Person* is a singularity of three Selves: *Self 1* is the

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[8]Or, as some would have it, entirely determined (Harris, 2012).

point of view, sense of location and action; *Self 2* is the unique set of characteristics attributed to a person; and *Self 3* is the impression a person makes on others. In information science, Day (2007) interprets the self, based on Harré's analysis, as an experiential index which is situated among information and other cultural systems.

Day's (2007) assertion begins to concretely show how interactions with information and technology play a role in the construction and conceptualization of the self. Floridi (2011a, p. 550) similarly argues that all information technologies are inherently "technologies of self construction, significantly affecting who we are, who we think we are, who we might become, and who we think we might become." To illustrate this argument, Floridi devises a theory of the self that is consistent with the other theories that I have discussed here. For Floridi, the self arises in a three-tiered encapsulation of an entity from its environment: first *biological*, formed by the chemical bonds of auto-structuring physical membranes; second *cognitive*, formed by the interdependence of data in perceptual information processing; and third *conscious*, formed by the semantic bonds of narrative and self-awareness. The boundaries of all these encapsulations are malleable—even the biological self, which may at first blush seem to be non-negotiable. As William James (1890/1950, p. 291) observed: "Between what a man calls *me* and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw. We feel and act about certain things that are ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves." To speak of art and artists, we can reflect upon *The Telegraph* reviewer Mark Hudson's (2014, para. 4) statement that "the idea that the artist is their art is all-pervading." Indeed, it has been demonstrated empirically, by Newman, Bartels, and Smith (2014), that people intuitively view artworks as extensions of the artists who made them.

Harré (1984) gestured toward the modern technological extension of self in proposing the concept of the file-self, on the observation that in modern society people are often encountered not in the flesh, but as documents. Harré gives the example of the hiring process, in which job candidates are first encountered and dealt with as file-selves. Harré (1984, p. 69) defines the file-self as "a collection of documents unified by their common referent, the person A." Harré goes on to discuss how file-selves and

real-selves differ. For instance: "A person's real-self is, amongst other things, a store of information, some of it reflexive. As a file-self, a person is almost wholly reduced to such a store" (Harré, 1984, p. 70). Some of our file-selves are made by us (such as resumes), but others are beyond our control and may be inaccessible to us (such as credit scores) (Harré, 1984). Depending on the particular situation, we may feel more or less identity with these various file-selves (Harré, 1984). It seems to me that the file-self deserves renewed attention today, as each of us is being bound by more and more—and more opaque—file-selves, such as those generated by algorithms, as described by Ed Finn (2017) in the book *What Algorithms Want.*

Before leaving the topic of the self, I would add a word about the relationship of the self to society. Though some proponents of the self seem to chagrin the social—Kierkegaard (1844/2014, p. 114), for instance, once referred to society as "a perpetual and meaningless muttering"—in my view it is important to note that the need for the concept of the self only arises in social contexts. Phenomenological philosophers such as Heidegger (1927/2010) recognized that human being is always being-with-others. Likewise Floridi (2013) acknowledges that the self cannot exist atomistically; it relies on being with other selves, which Floridi describes as "a collaborative and cumulative effort by generations through time" (Floridi, 2013, p. 221). This is because, Floridi says, fully being a (human) self involves language, culture and other sorts of social interaction.

Thus, inextricable from Floridi's (2011a, 2013) concept of the self is his concept of the *ontic trust*[9] (named after the legal concept of the trust), which brings us into the realm of ethics. Floridi describes the ontic trust as a "hypothetical pact…that all human…agents cannot help but sign when they come into existence" (Floridi, 2013, p. 301). It is a form of social contract, but a primordial one; the ontic trust suggests that all beings are bound to each other by their very fact of existing, which implies certain obligations of care and respect. Floridi's explanation is worth quoting in full:

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[9]Floridi's use of the word ontic here differs from Heidegger's. Admittedly this may be confusing. For Floridi, *ontic* refers to all that which is real or existent.

> By coming into being, an agent is made possible thanks to the existence of other entities. It *is* therefore bound to all that already is, both *unwillingly* and *inescapably*. It *should be so* also *caringly*. *Unwillingly*, because no agent wills itself into existence, though every agent can, in theory, will itself out of it. *Inescapably*, because the ontic bond may be broken by an agent only at the cost of ceasing to exist as an agent. Moral life does not begin with an act of freedom but it may end with one. *Caringly* because participation in reality by any entity, including an agent—that is, the fact that any entity is an expression of what exists—provides a right to existence and an invitation to respect and take care of other entities. The pact then involves no coercion, but a mutual relation of appreciation, gratitude and care, which is fostered by the recognition of the dependence of all entities on each other. . . . In short, the life of an agent becomes a journey from being only a beneficiary to being only a donor, passing through the stage of being a responsible trustee of the world. We begin our career of moral agents as strangers to the world; we should end it as friends of the world. (Floridi, 2013, p. 302)

This concept of the ontic trust has been picked up by scholars in information science as a philosophical grounding for the informational stewardship of information professionals (Bawden & Robinson, 2018; Fyffe, 2015; Van der Veer Martens, 2017). What has not yet been identified or explored is the fundamental role of the self in maintaining the ontic trust.

2.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have surveyed the literature that grounds my study of self-portraiture. As we have seen, this study draws from information behavior, document theory and various corners of philosophy. As such, it brings together and move forward a number of scholarly conversations. In particular, it addresses a need for the theorization of information behavior from the first-person perspective, which has emerged independently in the research areas of document experience and information experience.

As such, this study of the lived experience of self-portraiture, conceptualized as a form of documentation in which ontological understanding is employed and ontic understanding is sought, seems well-placed. In the following chapter, I outline the precise research questions the study addresses.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

> Document the world inside your skin
> ———————————————————
> "A Beginning Song"
> THE DECEMBERISTS, 2015

In this chapter, I present the research questions of my study and the methods I used to address them. I begin by articulating my research framework and questions, and then I discuss what it means to address these questions (§3.1). I proceed to situate my study within the interpretivist metatheory of hermeneutic phenomenology (§3.2), which is particularly suited to explore experience from the first person—"the world inside your skin," in the words of the Decemberists. This study draws methodologically from phenomenology of practice and arts-informed research (§3.3). Within this methodology, I employ a set of conceptual methods for my first two research questions (§3.4) and a set of empirical methods for my final two research questions (§3.5). I then discuss how quality has been considered in the design of my study and how the study can be assessed (§3.6). Finally, I present my researcher identity memo to further contextualize this interpretivist study (§3.7).

3.1 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND QUESTIONS

3.1.1 Research Framework

In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature in artists' information behavior, document theory, experience and understanding, as relevant to a study of self-portraiture.

This review provides sufficient grounding for a research study in information science. I support this claim by drawing on the framework for information science research developed by Robinson (2009). According to Robinson's (2009) framework, research in information science can be described along three dimensions: component, approach and context.

- *Component* refers to the component of the information–communication chain

under investigation; these include creation, dissemination, organization, indexing, storage and use (Robinson, 2009). Over the past decade, Robinson has amended this chain to also include discovery, management, preservation, analysis and understanding (while indexing and storage have been removed) (Robinson, 2018).

- *Approach* refers to the approach of domain analysis that a study employs, including empirical user studies, historical studies, etc. (Robinson, 2009).

- *Context* refers to the setting of a study, which entails a scale (e.g., individual, group, society) and media (e.g., books, digital information, museum objects) of interest (Robinson, 2009).

Robinson (2009) asserts that information science research can investigate any component with any approach in any context (though, of course, only some combinations fall within the scope of information behavior) (Robinson, 2009). Moreover, she contends that it is the unique purview of information science to be concerned with the totality of these combinations, even though, historically, some have been neglected (Robinson, 2009; Robinson & Karamuftuoglu, 2010).

In my study, the *components* are information creation, use and understanding, which I see to be unified as documentation; my *approach* combines empirical user studies, studies of documents and genres, and epistemological and critical studies (a combination recommended by Hjørland, 2002); and my *context* entails a scale of a lifeworld and the medium of the artistic self-portrait.

3.1.2 Research Questions

Within the framework articulated above and grounded in the literature surveyed in the previous chapter, I study four research questions in this dissertation. These questions are interrelated and build on each other progressively. They are qualitative in nature, and their goal is understanding: "Qualitative researchers are not tied to the notion of proving something. Instead, the intent of our work is to understand something" (Janesick, 2015, pp. 35–36).

3.1.2.1 Conceptual Questions

(RQ1) What sort of document is a self-portrait? This conceptual research question investigates the implications of conceptualizing art, specifically self-portraiture, as a document. It also problematizes the dictionary definition of *self-portrait*. For a document study, the self-portrait is a particularly interesting genre, as it blurs the line between factual representation and abstract expression, thus bridging two epistemic senses of the document. In the research methods literature, problematization has been identified by Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) as a way to move a field of inquiry forward.

By addressing this question, this study provides a deeper understanding of the self-portrait in today's technological climate (e.g., with respect to the selfie). Walsh (2012) sheds light on the modern concept of the icon through an investigation of the originary, religious icon as document; a study of self-portraiture as document does the same for modern forms of self-representation. Moreover, such an investigation offers a deeper appreciation for the meaningful role art plays in human life.

(RQ2) How can self-portraiture be conceptualized as documentation? If a document is a product, then documentation is the process of its creation (Lund, 2004). As already discussed, attention to the document calls for attention to documentation (Briet, 1951/2006). Thus, this conceptual question leads naturally from RQ1. In answering this question, I consider frameworks of documentation, document work and document experience available in the literature for the extent to which they account for the process of self-portraiture and then devise a conceptualization of self-portraiture (as documentation) from the first-person perspective.

Addressing this question provides a guiding theoretical framework for considering documentation, and thus information creation and use, from the first-person perspective. It also furnishes a deeper understanding of art-making in general through its framework for considering an artwork's creation (rather than only its finished state). It also lends insight into the boundaries of self-portraiture—that is, when it starts and ends. As in many creative acts, this question is more complicated than it may at first

appear. Does self-portraiture begin when a person first puts brush to panel, or when those supplies are purchased, or when the image is first ideated, or in a moment that seems unrelated to self-portraiture until after the fact, or at some other time entirely? And when does self-portraiture end? Information science does not yet have an answer this question, but it is one that artists have considered time and again. Leonardo da Vinci, for example, wrote, "A work of art is never finished, only abandoned." And beyond artwork, the same questions can be asked of any sort of document, self-document or otherwise, and this framework contributes to answering them.

3.1.2.2   Empirical Questions

(RQ3) What is the nature of the lived experience of self-portraiture? Following the conceptual groundwork represented by RQ1 and RQ2, this empirical question plumbs the lived experience of creating a self-portrait. This type of question has been identified as long overlooked in academic research (Nagel, 1974; Worth, 2008), though is standard in phenomenological research (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; van Manen, 1990, 2014). It is deliberately open-ended in effort to uncover phenomena that may have been overlooked by other approaches (Elgin, 2017a, 2017b; Smith et al., 2009). This is important because, as Ocepek (2018) points out, studies of everyday information behavior have suffered from overly limiting from the start what qualifies as informative. This sort of question is particularly well-suited to exploratory research (Smith et al., 2009), and my study here is exploratory. It has been argued that this sort of question can lead to useful results for information science research and development (Budd, Hill, & Shannon, 2010; Hepworth, Grunewald, & Walton, 2014; VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). Moreover, in my case, exploring this question will serve to bolster the more deductive approach taken in RQ2.

Addressing this question tests and extends the conceptualization that resulted from RQ2, which furnishes lessons for document theory in general. It also provides a sensitive account of the lived experience of this type of documentation. This account may be useful to those who use self-portraiture as a therapeutic or educational intervention,

for instance, or to those who wish to better appreciate art-making in general.

(RQ4) What understanding is built through making a self-portrait? This question follows naturally from RQ3, now focusing specifically on the understanding, both ontological and ontic, in self-portraiture. This question seeks to identify understandings that result from the process of self-portraiture and the aspects of self-portraiture that contributed to each understanding. Again, this is meant to be a holistic question, following Elgin's (2017a) holistic conceptualization (quoted above on page 31) of understanding as a way to approach how it is "woven into the fabric of human life." Though such open-ended inquiry may be incompatible with some research approaches, it is standard fare—even requisite—in phenomenological research, which is exploratory (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 1990, 2014) and has as its aim the exploration of understanding (Budd, 2005; Vamanu, 2013; van Manen, 2014).

Addressing this question gives a sense of how documents and other information are involved together in understanding. This may contribute to the development and refinement of services, education and other interventions meant to facilitate understanding. It may also be useful for art education and art therapy.

3.2 METATHEORETICAL MATTERS

A metatheory is a set of principles that underlies a study or theory and guides inquiry into a phenomenon (Bates, 2005). My study is broadly situated in the philosophy of human science (§3.2.1), which I interpret as a form of critical inquiry (§3.2.2). More specifically, this study is framed within the metatheory of hermeneutic phenomenology, which is an interpretivist metatheory suited for the study of understanding (§3.2.3).

3.2.1 Human Science

Philosophically, this study is rooted in human science. This tradition was first articulated by Dilthey (1883/1989) as a way to recover the complexity of human existence as a counterpoint to the state of the natural sciences in the 19th century (Smith, 2016). Human science believes in the power of thinking, and it assumes that, though aspects

of life may be made intelligible and communicable, "lived human experience is always more complex than the result of any singular description" and "there is always an element of the ineffable to life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 16). Human science seeks to reveal human truths; but, as novelist Terry Pratchett (1988, p. 173) observed, "The truth isn't easily pinned to a page." Rather, for human science, exposing the tension between intelligibility and ineffability is the practical virtue, and it is both necessary and urgent (van Manen, 1990).

From its foundation, human science has had a critical agenda, in the sense that it challenges assumptions (Smith, 2016). As articulated on the website of the Human Science Institute (n.d.), human science seeks to improve co-understandings among people. Jim Smith (2016) takes this further, suggesting that the role of human science is to ensure a humane future by investigating and challenging the development of science and technology. "If you are a human scientist, you are by definition a revolutionary intellectual" (Smith, 2016, p. 8). This critical role may be unwelcome in many situations, but it is necessary for human liberty, as Immanuel Kant (1781/1999) argued centuries ago. More recently, Day (2014b, p. 152) reiterates, "Without critique, the right of people and persons to invent and reinvent their own lives and to make their own experiences disappears."

3.2.2 Critical Inquiry

I agree with Day's (2014b) view that critique is especially important in information science because of the centrality of information technology in human life. Day (2014b) argues that the trajectory of technology in the 20th century has turned the public and scholars away from critique. As a result, even though we may recognize urgent problems, we feel powerless against them (Day, 2014b). Floridi (2013) concurs, referring to this phenomenon as the tragedy of the good will and calling for critical attention to information-ethical issues.

This points to the need for stronger critical perspectives in information science research and pedagogy. In the introduction to *Critical Theory for Library and Information*

Science, Leckie and Buschman (2010) remark that information science does not have a strong tradition of metatheoratical discourse; this view was echoed by Buckland and Lund (2013). As a result, Leckie and Buschman contend, perspectives have been adopted from other disciplines often without critical or contextualized understanding. Leckie and Buschman also point out that incorporating critical perspectives will help information science become more aware of developments in other disciplines, respond better to issues it faces in the world of practice, advocate for itself, expose unquestioned assumptions, and reveal new horizons for research. Building on this need, the *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* was recently founded, providing an open forum for developing critical inquiry within information science (Lau, Sellie, & Day, 2017).

Beyond information science, critical inquiry also serves to recapture the *Bildung* [shaping, formation, enlightenment] spirit of the university—one of broad-mindedness, leisure, playful knowledge and intellectual development. Indeed, as Buckland (2000, 2005) suggests, such an effort may be particularly important coming from within information science, which has traditionally been focused on training technical skills rather than engaging with what's "simply interesting."

Thus, for reasons both within and outside of information science, my dissertation study takes a human science, critical angle. It seeks to interrogate prominent assumptions regarding the nature of information, knowledge and understanding, and it will hope to expose new frontiers for research, practice and being—all in the interest of contributing to a more humane future.

3.2.3 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Metatheoretically, this study is rooted in hermeneutic phenomenology, which is an interpretive form of phenomenology (Heidegger, 1927/2010). It was conceived by Heidegger (1927/2010), who proposed to unify phenomenology (the description of lived experience) and hermeneutics (textual interpretation). (A complete intellectual history of phenomenology is given by Käufer & Chemero, 2015; a broad treatment of

phenomenology organized by concept is given by Sokolowski, 2000.) Born alongside human science, phenomenology has long been allied with human science inquiry, and the same goes for hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger, 1927/2010). As described by Heidegger, hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to allow something that normally remains hidden to be revealed. Moreover, hermeneutic phenomenology is appropriate for this study because it is tuned to study understanding (Budd, 2005; Vamanu, 2013).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is an interpretivist paradigm (Williamson & Johanson, 2018). As such, it is similar to both constructivism (which is concerned with how people construct their worlds) and social constructionism (which sees reality as constituted through shared dialogic processes) (Talja, Tuominen, & Savolainen, 2005); however, it does not fit entirely within either of those approaches. Thus Talja et al. (2005) concede that the phenomenological metatheory is not easily classifiable according to their framework of constructivism, collectivism and constructionism. A recent methodological text in information science (Williamson & Johanson, 2018) defines phenomenology as an interpretivist paradigm in its own right.

3.2.4 First-Person Perspective

It is well-established in the philosophy of science that all theories, models, concepts, etc., have a perspective, including supposedly non-perspectival (i.e., objective) scientific theories (Van Fraassen, 2008). Elgin (2017b) explains this in terms of indexicality, occlusion and noncommitment: Theories and models are *indexical* in that they represent things from somewhere and towards somewhere; they are *occlusive* in that they hide some phenomena by representing others; and they are more or less *(non)committal* in that they represent only certain properties of the universe, ignoring others. Thus, according to Elgin (2017b, pp. 206–207), "By adopting a different perspective, we come to see familiar items in new ways. ... For example, the shift from third-person to first-person perspective may be crucial to appreciating the close connection between belief and assertion."

Indeed, according to Elgin (2017b) it is only through the first-person that cer-

tain phenomena come to light. This is the case with understanding, as Elgin argues (see also §2.2.1). Nearly two centuries ago, this was a chief insight of Kierkegaard (1846/2009), who proposed a difference between objective truth (what is said) and subjective truth (how it is said). As commentator C. Stephen Evans (2009) explains, for Kierkegaard objective truth "can be directly or immediately passed on to another person," while subjective truth

> is not communication of "results" but of "a way," and this kind of understanding cannot be directly or immediately passed on to another person, but requires an indirect or "artful" form of communication. ... [It] is an understanding that bears on a person's own existence, how life should be lived. [Kierkegaard] does think that it is possible to think about such things and to communicate one's thought to others. (Evans, 2009, p. 30)

This was also the perspective of James (1902/2002), who discussed the need for the first-person perspective in the study of existential matters such as religious experience; and it has continued to be recognized in psychology and epistemology that first-person and third-person perspectives reveal different aspects of reality. Paul Pardi (2010) gives examples of how the two perspectives differ. To paraphrase:

Third-person The man knows he has an intense feeling of pain in his back, that he cannot stand up, and that he is inclined to say "ouch!" frequently in his present state.

First-person God! It's like a dagger in my spine. Can't someone help? I keep trying to find a comfortable position, but moving hurts so much. I've never felt anything so awful.

To be sure, first-person research can easily be fraught; people can misremember details and be deluded; moreover, remembering things has been shown to change the memory (George, 2013). Methodologies have been developed to take this into account; these fall under the broad umbrella of phenomenology, which may be considered an intellectual successor to Kierkegaard's philosophy (Käufer & Chemero, 2015). One methodology in this family is phenomenology of practice (van Manen, 2014), which

has seen development and application in the social and human sciences, and is detailed in terms of methods and analysis. Phenomenology of practice is described below (§3.3.1).

It is important to note that the concept of perspective here is different than that of unit of analysis. As defined by Earl Babbie (2007), the unit of analysis of a study is the main entity being examined. As Babbie explains, typical units of analysis include individuals (the most common), groups, social organizations and social artifacts. On Babbie's account, a virtuous research question will probe a single unit of analysis (e.g., the individual or the group, but not both). This is because, as Babbie says, adopting a unit of analysis is a way to reduce a phenomenon to a number of elements, selected a priori, so as to render it empirically studiable. It may be tempting to say that in a hermeneutic-phenomenological study, the unit of analysis is the individual. However, this is not correct. Rather, the unit of analysis is the experience, situated within the lifeworld, i.e., as experienced from the first-person perspective. Thus no boundaries are drawn from the outset between individual and society, or between substance and activity, etc.

Theories not only have a perspective, but they also have a telos (Floridi, 2011b); that is, they move in a direction from origin to application. To understand the contribution a first-person study can make, we should consider this. I will discuss the matter in the following sections, but for now it may suffice to say that first-person findings can be useful for building empathy (van Manen, 2014) and understanding how information phenomena manifest in people's experience (Hepworth et al., 2014), which can lead to the development of more effective information solutions. We all experience information as finite, existential beings; and as Kierkegaard (1846/2009) long ago pointed out, existential problems cannot be solved from an external and eternal standpoint alone.

Adopting lived experience as my unit of analysis can be considered an outgrowth of the related person-in-situation and task-theory approaches to research in information science, which have allowed for units of analysis such as work task and practice to

be studied (Talja & Nyce, 2015). For the bulk of research in this tradition, "meanings, experiences, and sensemaking are secondary compared to understanding and observing situated action" (Talja & Nyce, 2015, p. 64). I contend that research situated in the first-person perspective eliminates this dualism and brings our understanding forward. This viewpoint is shared by Ocepek (2018), who implicitly points out how information science research has been limited by overreliance on the third-person perspective. She writes:

> In both [information behavior] and [everyday information behavior], sources are often viewed as things read, heard, or seen by an individual and are taken at face value: if an individual reads an article about a specific medical procedure, then he or she is regarded as having received that information. In contrast, scholars of the everyday look at how individuals interact with information on a personalized level [rooted in lived experience]. (p. 405)

3.3 METHODOLOGY

Building on metatheory, a methodology is a more specific philosophical guide for carrying out a study (Dervin, 2005). A methodology provides a framework for considering phenomena of interest, and it opens and closes certain possibilities for a study (Dervin, 2005). This study employs the methodology of phenomenology of practice (§3.3.1), with compatible imports from arts-informed research (§3.3.2).

3.3.1 Phenomenology of Practice

Methodologically, my study draws from the toolkit for conducting hermeneutic phenomenology that has been articulated by van Manen (1990, 2014) as phenomenology of practice. Phenomenology of practice is a contemporary formulation of empirical hermeneutic phenomenology with deep philosophical roots (van Manen, 2014).

Phenomenology of practice employs the inductive, idiographic analysis of particular cases to describe and interpret the complexity of the lifeworlds of human actors and draw out findings that generate knowledge that is not merely gnostic (cognitive, procedural) in nature; rather, phenomenological knowledge is pathic (emotional, ontological) (van Manen, 2014) and poetic (a holistic, from-the-inside experience of real-

ity) (Taylor, 1998). As such, phenomenology of practice is poised to contribute to the broadening of the epistemological framework of information science (i.e., enriching our conceptualizations of information and knowledge). As van Manen writes:

> The aim is not to create technical intellectual tools or prescriptive models for telling us what to do or how to do something effectively. Rather, a phenomenology of practice aims to open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact. (van Manen, 2014, pp. 69–70)

Phenomenology of practice is well-suited to the study of understanding because it offers analytical techniques for exploring consciousness and lived experience (van Manen, 1990, 2014), and understanding is a process of consciousness and lived experience (Bawden & Robinson, 2016a, 2016b; Heidegger, 1927/2010). Moreover, phenomenology of practice is well-suited to the study of the dialogic dynamics of the art world discussed by Becker (1982) and Régimbeau (2009) because of its careful, holistic and descriptive attention to lived experience. It is also suitable to build directly on the findings of Cowan (2004) and Tidline (2003), discussed in §2.1.2, as both studies of art-making were rooted in phenomenology.

A study of the building of understanding in a skill-based pursuit such as self-portraiture should consider the tacit dimension of knowledge, as it is presumed that understanding involves myriad sorts of knowledge. Phenomenology of practice was expressly formulated to surface tacit knowledge (van Manen, 2014). To ensure this, hermeneutic-phenomenological methods typically rely on recruiting participants who are expressive and well-spoken (Smith et al., 2009). As discussed below, my study sought to incorporate a surer way to surface tacit knowledge by drawing on additional research techniques, chiefly those developed in knowledge management. My approach was attentive to the caveats raised by Day (2005) and Tsoukas (2011) that tacit knowledge is in principle inseparable from the action that constitutes it and may be ineffable. As such, my methods helped ensure that a spectrum of gnostic and pathic ways of knowing were surfaced in my study.

3.3.2 Arts-Informed Research

Given the visual nature of self-portraiture, and the ineffable nature of certain aspects of human knowing, a study of self-portraiture can benefit from incorporating aspects of visual methods. Visual methods employ images to learn about human life (Prosser & Loxley, 2008).

While visual methods are relatively new to information science (Hartel & Thomson, 2011), they have been growing in popularity and importance across the social sciences over the last three decades (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). As Prosser and Loxley (2008) explain, visual methods are heterogeneous and can accommodate a variety of philosophical perspectives, including phenomenology, and they can direct an entire project or form merely one aspect of a larger project. Prosser and Loxley (2008) describe a number of visual approaches, some of which rely on researcher-generated visual material, while others rely on participant-generated material.

A visual approach of particular relevance here is arts-related research. Arts-related research "uses the arts, in its broadest sense, to explore, understand and represent human action and experience" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 1). As Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014) say, arts-related research comes in many forms, but it generally abides some overarching principles: It makes a moral commitment; it generates knowledge through the work; it focuses on reflexivity; it emphasizes accessibility; it brings together diverse forms of quality measurement; and it exhibits a sense of integrity.

Arts-*informed* research is one type of arts-related research (Cole & Knowles, 2008; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014). Arts-informed research is informed by, but not disciplinarily based in, the arts (Cole & Knowles, 2008). It uses art-making as a way of understanding a broader set of issues of interest to a given academic discipline (Cole & Knowles, 2008). Arts-informed research seeks ways to represent and advance knowledge in ways that may challenge traditional academic boundaries, and it seeks to make findings available to wider publics (Cole & Knowles, 2008). As such, arts-informed research strives to make its findings accessible to non-experts and engage participation beyond the academy (Cole & Knowles, 2008).

Additional guidelines for arts-informed research have been developed in drawing research, an emerging field that conceptualizes drawing as the meeting point for research in art, design, education, medicine, neuroscience, psychology and social action (Kantrowitz, Brew, & Fava, 2011; Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith, & Campbell, 2011; see also *thinkingthroughdrawing.org*). This research seeks to understand creative thinking and how drawing can shed light on cognition more broadly (Kantrowitz et al., 2011). Best practices in drawing research include reassuring participants of their self-efficacy, establishing rapport with them ahead of time, allowing them to choose their materials, offering time to work at a leisurely pace, involving them in the interpretation process, and allowing for civic dissemination of the drawings (Mitchell et al., 2011).

Though arts-informed research is new to information science, it is not without precedent. Hartel (2014a) presents an arts-informed study of students' visual definitions for *information*; in a subsequent publication, Hartel and Savolainen (2016) analyze the visual metaphors that surfaced in these definitions. In keeping with the tenets of arts-informed research, Hartel has made the outcomes of this and her related studies available in a permanent, open-access, online exhibition at *isquares.info*. As Hartel and Savolainen note, arts-informed methods lend themselves to interpretative metatheories; Mitchell et al. (2011) also note that an important aspect of arts-informed research is a sensitivity to the interpretive context and possibilities of visual material. Thus, it is compatible with the hermeneutic metatheory that I adopt in my study. Taking this further, Saikat Chakraborty (2017) writes that a narrative-based methodology (of which phenomenology of practice is one) is well suited for the study of creative practice. Finally, arts-informed research may also be particularly conducive to the study of understanding, as drawing is an effective method for surfacing the elusive and ineffable aspects of human being, according to Mitchell et al. (2011).

It is worth noting that arts-informed research has synergy with arts-based research and practice-led research. Arts-based research uses art-making as the primary way of understanding and examining experience in itself (McNiff, 2008). Generally, it

takes place within the artistic disciplines (McNiff, 2008). Recently, artists (particularly those in academic settings) have been seeking to conceptualize their art-making as an epistemic activity—that is, research—which has become known as practice-led research (Barrett & Bolt, 2010; Sullivan, 2009). Another strain of practice-led research involves (non-artist) researchers in any field reflecting on their own research process and knowledge construction through art (Green, 2009). Recently, these strains have intermingled: Work by Rae and Green (2016) demonstrates how researchers can use self-portraiture as a locus for reflecting on their own work as research, and they assert that such a technique could be used in any qualitative research field. Brian Roberts (2011) also asserts that self-portraiture is burgeoning in arts-related research. Roberts finds the self-portrait particularly alluring for the questions it invokes regarding the nature of documentary and scientific evidence. Certainly the tradition of documentation studies is well equipped to contribute to dealing with such questions. With all this in mind, though my study as conceived here is arts-informed, it is aware of and may have the capacity to engage with arts-based and practice-led research, including metatheoretically.

3.4 CONCEPTUAL METHODS FOR RQ1 AND RQ2

My first two research questions were conceptual in nature and were essentially a matter of theorizing. To guide my efforts, I referred to Richard Swedberg's (2014) text *The Art of Social Theory*. Swedberg argues that theorizing should be given a "distinct and sizable space in the research process" (p. 26), whereas in Swedberg's estimation it is typically only an afterthought in social science research. "This is a recipe for slow progress" (Swedberg, 2014, p. 26). Throughout the book, Swedberg suggests many ways to stimulate the theoretical imagination, such as reading the works of great theorists, conducting organic social observation, exploring names and concepts, and looking for analogies and patterns. Much of this advice echoes that given by van Manen (2014) in *Phenomenology of Practice*. For further and continued inspiration throughout the process, I turned to *Theory Development in the Information Sciences* (Sonnenwald,

2016), which includes stories of theorizing from a number of distinguished researchers.

Below I describe my process of theorizing in response to RQ1 and RQ2; to be sure, theorizing also came into play in the empirical stage of my process. In addition to the techniques described below, I gave myself the space to read literature, philosophy and poetry, including some that was not directly related to my project, as a way to stimulate creative thinking, as counseled by both Swedberg (2014) and van Manen (2014).

3.4.1 Conceptual Methods for RQ1

My first research question is: **(RQ1) What sort of document is a self-portrait?** To broach this question, I begin with an ontic[1] analysis of self-portraits, particularly as they have been discussed in art history and popular discourse. This is a common starting strategy for phenomenological research (Introna & Ilharco, 2004); as Heidegger (1927/2010) contends, the ontological must be approached through the ontic. Additionally, this was the strategy Walsh (2012) used in his study of religious icons as documents. Accomplishing this entailed a broad literature review and analysis in the areas of art history and visual culture. Next, I conducted an etymological analysis of the word *self-portrait* and related terms. This analysis attempted to plumb deeper than what is given by the dictionary definitions. Such analyses are mainstays of phenomenological investigation (Introna & Ilharco, 2004; van Manen, 1990, 2014). They serve to cultivate insights that will guide further inquiry into the lived experience of a phenomenon, on the basis that they "put us in touch with an original form of life where the terms still had living ties to the lived experiences from which they originally sprang" (van Manen, 1990, p. 59). After this, similar phenomena are investigated to bolster the understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Introna & Ilharco, 2004; van Manen, 1990, 2014). For example, in their phenomenological study of screens, Introna and Ilharco (2004) also contemplate mirrors. In my study, to deepen my

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[1] To recapitulate, ontics gives an account of particular *beings*, while ontology gives an account of *being* as such (Heidegger, 1927/2010).

understanding of the self-portrait, I also looked at the selfie.

With the insights gained through this analysis, I continued to interrogate the self-portrait and selfie as documentary forms through reductive analysis (van Manen, 2014). I did this with reference to the document-theory concepts of reference, evidence and meaning (see §2.1.3.1). This analysis was based on a literature review of research in fields such as art history, philosophy and computer-mediated communication.

3.4.2 Conceptual Methods for RQ2

With the understanding built through investigating RQ1, I embarked on another conceptual research question: **(RQ2) How can self-portraiture be conceptualized as documentation?** In answer to this question, I developed a first-person framework of documentation that draws from those extant in the literature.

Perhaps the most-cited model of documentation is that articulated by Lund (2004), which characterizes documentation as a process that unfolds in time and entails (1) a human producer, (2) a set of media instruments for producing, (3) a mode of using these instruments and (4) the resulting document. Such a description, however, seems an unsatisfactory account of a documentary process as personally meaningful as self-portraiture. I contend that this is because it is a third-person theory, whereas self-portraiture demands a first-person theory (as discussed above, and which becomes clearer in my treatment of RQ1). That is, in my view, what is eclipsed in Lund's (2004) conceptualization of the process of documentation is the *process itself*, i.e., the *experience*.

In order to do justice to self-portraiture as an experiential process, a different conceptualization will be necessary. Along with Latham, I have elsewhere begun to develop such a view, presenting a framework that seeks to recognize the lifeworld of both the person and the object(s) involved in a document experience (see Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). One limitation of this framework, however, is that it represents one moment in time rather than a process unfolding in time. In another research project, I

developed another framework, which I call the foundation–process–challenges framework, to describe the experience of document work in a Japanese garden (Gorichanaz, 2016). This other framework does include time to some extent, but at present this framework remains disconnected from these other strands of literature.

Thus, to address this research question, I developed a framework that extends my previous work (Gorichanaz, 2016; Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016) by incorporating the passage of time and the usage of medium and mode (Lund, 2004). To do this, I drew on John Dewey's (1934) discussion of the narrative structure of lived experience. Dewey's account informed Johnson's (2007) argument for the embodiment of meaning as well as Latham's previous work (2009, 2014) and our framework (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). In the present task, I returned to Dewey's work for its treatment of temporal unfolding. In Dewey's view, experiences that are identified as such (and thus picked out from the flow of existence) always have narrative completeness, and include several aspects: continuity between intra- and extra-experience aspects of existence; deepening complexity as time progresses; meaning that persists after the experience concludes; challenges encountered; and anticipation of culmination. Commentator Philip Jackson (1998) suggests that these aspects can be used as analytical tools in interrogating lived experiences.

To speak of nuts and bolts, I did this by first conducting a deep reading of each of these texts. This deep reading took the form of a phenomenological analysis (van Manen, 2014), which entails iterative cycles of: holistic reading (getting a sense of the whole); selective reading (singling out sections that seem especially revealing or essential); and detailed reading (examining each part and asking what it contributes) (van Manen, 2014). Based on what I learned about the self-portrait through exploring RQ1, I made a list of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the frameworks in describing self-portraiture. I compare what each of these four structures captures and overlooks. Comparing the structures in this way, I synthesized a framework of the documentation process that shows the temporal structure of documentation from the first-person perspective.

This nascent framework was then tested in the empirical stage of my project, described in the following section. This empirical work considered the question of how self-portraiture, framed as a kind of documentation, contributes to a person's understanding—and the nature of that understanding.

3.5 EMPIRICAL METHODS FOR RQ3 AND RQ4

My treatment of RQ1 and RQ2 sheds light on self-portraits and self-portraiture, situating the former as a kind of document and the latter as a kind of documentation. Moreover, the framework resulting from RQ2 is useful in describing and considering other cases of documentation. Even so, all this does little to address the relationship between self-portraiture and understanding.

To this end, I next considered the questions: **(RQ3) What is the qualitative nature of the lived experience of self-portraiture?** and **(RQ4) What understanding is built through making a self-portrait?** Both questions were addressed through the same empirical study; an answer to RQ3 came in the first phase of analysis, and RQ4 in the second.

3.5.1 Overview

The phenomenon of interest in this study was the process of self-portraiture. As described in §3.2.4, the unit of analysis was the lived experience of self-portraiture. A lived experience is temporally and intentionally (i.e., through human attention) bound by the narrative structure described by Dewey (1934). To study this phenomenon with this unit of analysis, I collected and interrogated lived experience *examples* (the term preferred by van Manen, 2014) of self-portraiture from live human participants who were not necessarily famous or even professional artists.

The study in a nutshell: I recruited participants to create self-portraits. I col-
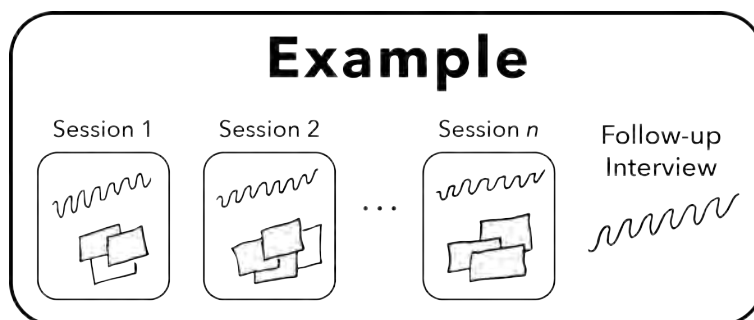
Figure 3.1: Phenomenological example of self-portraiture. Each consists of in-progress materials as well as a follow-up interview.

lected visual and verbal empirical material[2] as they individually worked on their pieces. Then, about a week after each piece was finished, I conducted a follow-up interview with each participant. All the material from each individual constituted a phenomenological example, or case (see Figure 3.1). Different examples comprised different numbers of art-making sessions. Analysis began along with collection and proceeded iteratively according to guidelines given by Smith et al. (2009) and van Manen (2014). Further detail on all this is given below.

3.5.2 Research Ethics

Any study involving human participants demands a discussion of research ethics. Rose (2016), Mitchell et al. (2011), Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014) and Wiles et al. (2008) offer specific ethical guidelines regarding visual and arts-related research, which informed the design of my study. Though I did not foresee any serious risks to participants, and though my study did not involve any vulnerable or special popu-

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[2] *Empirical material* is the preferred term in phenomenology of practice for what researchers sometimes refer to as *data* (van Manen, 2014). For philosophical consistency, *empirical material* is the term I use in this study. Numerous scholars have discussed issues with using *data* to describe qualitative research material (Bowker, 2014; Day, 2014b; Drucker, 2014; Furner, 2016); in short, the word *data* comes from the Latin for *given* (Data, 2016) and implies that data simply "exist." Bowker (2014) points out that this has led to the widespread presumption that data obsolesces theory. On the interpretivist worldview, however, this cannot be the case. As Johanna Drucker (2014, p. 128) writes, "*Data are capta*, taken not given, constructed as an interpretation of the phenomenal world, not inherent in it."

lations, I recognized that creating a self-portrait may have unforeseen consequences. Self-portraits are very personal, and describing the process of creating a self-portrait may open participants up to emotional vulnerability that they may or may not be prepared for. I described this possibility during the consent-gathering stage of working with each participant; I emphasized that all questions were optional, that they could redact their answers post facto and that they could leave the study at any time.

Seeing as my participants were enlisted to create information, I was also sensitive to issues regarding intellectual property and privacy in the design of this study. The first such issue I considered was anonymity. Because self-portraits may be more or less self-representational, it may have been difficult for a participant to remain anonymous as a participant in this study. As is well known, anonymity is generally considered a virtue in social science research. However, as a counterpoint, Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014) point out that it may actually be unethical to force artists to disavow ownership of their work, even if it is done in a research setting. With all this in mind, I gave my participants the choice to remain anonymous, and I gave them time and space to comfortably and privately come to their decision. In the end, all my participants decided, and vehemently so, to be named in my study.

Finally, I sought consent for the images in this study to be shared. I specifically sought consent for the particular venues in which sharing would conceivably be possible: in my dissertation, in academic publications, in popular publications and on a website of my own creation. This consent was sought multiple times: once at the outset of my study, and again as each particular image was subject to being shared. While the study was underway, I was able to arrange for these works to be publicly exhibited; again I sought each artist's consent to exhibit their piece, along with photographs and text from the process, and I emphasized that participation was optional.

In February 2017, I obtained approval from the Drexel University Institutional Review Board to conduct this research. Ethical reasoning did not stop there, however. Throughout 2017 and into 2018 I began focusing on the information ethics literature, and in the January–March 2018 quarter I taught a course on the subject. During these

activities, I reflected on the choices I had made and was making in my research. These reflections influenced decisions I made in communicating with my participants and building the project website, for example.

3.5.3 Recruitment

I recruited adult participants who lived in Philadelphia and could commit to creating a self-portrait over at least two work sessions and sharing their process and experience with me in detail. I sought to recruit up to six participants; my study, being a deep and sensitive analysis of the structure of lived experience, would have been tenable with even one participant, and many more than six would have precluded timely and deep analysis (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 2014). Smith et al. (2009) argue that having 3–6 participants is suitable for uncovering meaningful findings in hermeneutic phenomenology. I sought to assemble a group with diverse levels of art-making experience and professionalism so that my study would include as many different approaches to self-portraiture as possible. The "two session" stipulation was given so that the creation process could be ascertained in some detail. (I define and discuss *session* in more detail below, in §3.5.4)

So that I could be as open as possible, I did not define *self-portrait* in my recruitment materials, nor did I stipulate a medium that the artist must use. This is compatible with hermeneutic phenomenological research in that it allowed participants to define and interpret concepts naturalistically (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 1990, 2014), and it is also compatible with the tenets of drawing research (Mitchell et al., 2011).

I recruited my participants in the manner of convenience sampling (noting that the term *sampling* is generally not used in phenomenological research, according to van Manen, 2014). I began by reaching out to local artists that I knew personally and used snowball sampling to allow participants to recruit others (three participants were recruited this way). I then directly contacted artists, art educators and community arts organizations via email. I only contacted those whose information was publicly available. I discovered these contacts through open web searches for terms such as

"Philadelphia artist" (four participants were recruited this way).

I met individually with my participants in person prior to their beginning the project. This was part of consent-gathering, but it also allowed me to establish rapport with them, which is an important part of drawing research (Mitchell et al., 2011) and phenomenological research (Smith et al., 2009).

Recruitment went from March to May 2017. In total, I enrolled eight participants. Though I was aiming for six participants, I recruited above this number to hedge against possible attrition. In the end, seven of my participants completed the research activities.

3.5.3.1 Participants

Below I offer a brief introduction to each participant in my study. Here as elsewhere, the artists are listed in alphabetical order by first name.

Brian Jerome A man in his mid-20s, Brian recently graduated from the MFA program at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He is a multimedia, abstract painter. *http://brianjerome.com*

Brianna Ballinghoff A young woman in her late teens, Brianna is currently a BFA student at the University of the Arts, studying illustration. Brianna is also a body piercer and tattoo apprentice. *https://instagram.com/ballinghoff.brianna/*

Britt Miller A woman in her early 30s, Britt works in IT. As hobbies, she paints and runs ultramarathons. She paints in acrylic, and her artwork features bright colors and bold outlines. *http://brittmillerart.com*

Emily Addis A woman in her mid-20s, Emily works in education and outreach at the Barnes Foundation. As a hobby, she paints and enjoys crafting.

Jeannie Moberly A woman in her mid-60s, Jeannie has worked as an artist for her whole life. She recently retired from a career in fashion. Her painting is surreal and environmentalist. *http://moberly.cjfearnley.com*

Justin Tyner A man in his late 30s, Justin is a stained glass artist. By day he works at an architectural stained glass studio, and by night he works on his own creations, including street art. *http://justintynerstainedglass.squarespace.com*

Tammy Hala A woman in her early 30s, Tammy left her research career in 2015 to pursue aerial acrobatics, farming, painting and photography. Much of her artworks are abstract flow pieces. *http://www.tamarahala.com*

3.5.4   Gathering Examples

The collection of empirical material began at the end of each participant's first art-making work session ("session"). I define a session as a block of time in which an artist works on a particular piece. Most of the artists' projects can be conceptualized in terms of discrete, identifiable sessions (e.g., spending two hours working on it in one afternoon). Jeannie, however, described her work as occurring in "stolen moments"—spare bits of time here and there. The number of sessions, their frequency and duration, and how much was done in a session varied (as expected); fortunately, this variance was not deleterious to my study.

At the end of each session, the participant photographed their in-progress portrait as well as the tools they used, any sketches they made and material they referenced (such as stock imagery, other artists' works and poetry). The participant then recorded their answers to a list of questions about their art-making session (see Appendix C, Session Protocol). These questions were designed to elicit details of the art-making session as lived and surface tacit knowledge through questioning about temporary breakdowns and encouraging the use of metaphors. In developing this method, I drew inspiration from the technique of think-aloud protocols (Ericsson & Simon, 1993), typical in sociotechnical research. I mentioned to each participant that I preferred these responses to be audio-recorded, as verbal interviewing encourages expressiveness and rich detail (Smith et al., 2009). Britt and Emily, however, told me that they would prefer to type their responses. According to van Manen (1990, 2014), writing can be an appropriate way to gather detailed lived experience examples just as

Figure 3.2: The setting of Brian's interview, in his Philadelphia studio. His self-portrait sat between us, and we referred to it continually as we talked.

talking can. Thus I allowed Britt and Emily to participate in this way, and I counseled them to write in as much detail as they could, including details that they might think are irrelevant, and to not worry about spelling or grammar.

The participants were given their preference for sending me this material; all chose to do so electronically, via email or Apple's iMessage service. During consent-gathering I alerted them to possible issues regarding data privacy. I confirmed this material as I received it. Though I did not do a thorough analysis immediately, I quickly reviewed it to make sure the participant was, for instance, answering the questions appropriately (early on, most of the participants asked for confirmation, given the open-endedness of the questions). As each portrait was finished, I briefly reviewed that participant's material to see what jumped out at me and determine some of the questions I wanted to ask in the follow-up interview; this technique was inspired by, but didn't tightly conform to, the concept of *contact summary form* described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

After each portrait was finished, I conducted a follow-up interview with the artist. This interview was semi-structured, and some of the questions depended on the particularities of each case; a preliminary protocol can be found in Appendix D (Follow-Up Interview Protocol). The follow-up interviews ranged in duration from 22 minutes to 92 minutes (with a mean of 43 minutes). Prior to the interview, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, I reviewed the empirical material I had collected to identify where I would like more detail or clarification. Based on this review, I finalized the protocol for the follow-up interview, which involved some questions unique to each participant. During the interview, I probed the participant's intentions, inspiration and process for details that did not emerge in their in-progress accounts. When possible, this interview took place in the space where the portrait was created (see Figure 3.2). This way, the participant could show me the way they used the space while creating the portrait. Where appropriate, I used images the participant provided throughout the process, and the finished portrait itself, to elicit richer responses during the interview, a technique recommended by Gillian Rose (2016). For the interviews that did not take place where the self-portrait was made (in practice, these were all cafés), I asked that the self-portrait be present, and this enriched the interview. I took handwritten notes during each interview, and each participant allowed me to audio-record the interview. Immediately after each interview, I typed up my field notes and added additional comments that I did not have time to write *in situ* (Figure 3.5b). I used Evernote to manage these and other notes associated with this project.

Beyond garnering additional details about the process, this interview offered an opportunity to interrogate the participant's meaning-making of the complete experience of self-portraiture, which revealed some of the understandings they built during the process and between the time of its completion and that of the interview (in practice, about a week). According to van Manen (1990, 2014) this sort of follow-up interview has the benefit of allowing the participant to assist in analysis and knowledge generation, a technique that encourages the surfacing of tacit knowledge (Mulder & Whiteley, 2007) and is compatible with drawing research (Mitchell et al., 2011). Moreover, the

Table 3.1: Quantitative summary of the empirical material collected with each artist participant. The symbol $\bar{x}$ indicates arithmetic mean.

Artist	Medium	Sessions	Session Duration ($\bar{x}$)	Session Interview Length ($\bar{x}$)	Follow-up Interview Duration	Photos
Brian	Oil, mixed	4	40 mins	3 mins	50 mins	6
Brianna	Acrylic	4	4 hrs	12 mins	23 mins	17
Britt	Acrylic	3	70 mins	655 words	22 mins	17
Emily	Oil, Polaroids	11	40 mins	300 words	36 mins	7
Jeannie	Oil, mixed	9	n/a	12 mins	92 mins	24
Justin	Stained glass	4	3 hrs	7 mins	42 mins	39
Tammy	Graphite	2	2 hrs	9 mins	35 mins	16

follow-up interview helped ensure that I did not misinterpret the participant's words or actions, and it may also serve to cultivate deeper, beneficial meanings within the participant (van Manen, 1990, 2014). This hedge against misinterpretation is something *akin to* member-checking, though it should be noted that, according to Smith et al. (2009) and van Manen (1990, 2014), member-checking as typically practiced is not appropriate to phenomenological research because of the issue of re-inscription of memory (mentioned in §3.2.4).

A quantitative summary of the empirical material collected is given in Table 3.1, and images of each completed self-portrait appear in Figure 3.3.

3.5.5 Analysis

In my analysis of the empirical material, I sought to, first, identify the narrative, thematic structure underlying my participants' experience of self-portraiture and, second, test and extend the framework that resulted from exploring RQ2 (*How can self-portraiture be conceptualized as documentation?*). My analytical strategies were informed by compatible, established guidelines for arts-related research (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014), drawing research (Mitchell et al., 2011), interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009), phenomenology of practice (van Manen, 1990, 2014) and general qualitative analysis (Maxwell, 2005; Miles et al., 2014). The analysis proceeded as described below, and the process is summarized in Figure 3.4. This work took place over the course of September–December 2017.
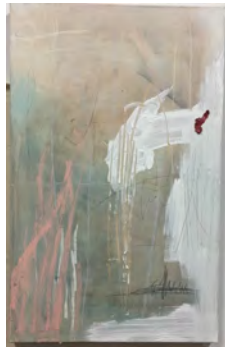
(a) Brian Jerome   (b) Brianna Ballinghoff
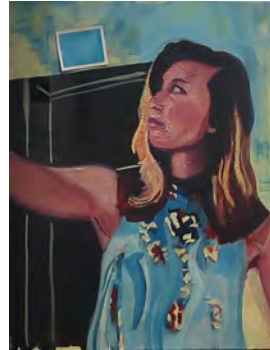
(c) Britt Miller   (d) Emily Addis

(e) Jeannie Moberly   (f) Justin Tyner
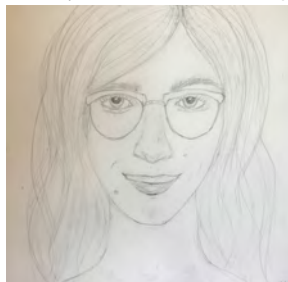
(g) Tammy Hala

Figure 3.3: All the participants' self-portraits

After the follow-up interview, I transcribed the verbal material so that it could be analyzed more expediently. I did this personally, aided by the transcription software *F5 Transcription Pro* and a USB pedal. To analyze it, I first read over the material twice and then set it aside for a few days, giving it a "long preliminary soak" (Hall, 1975, p. 15). I then conducted multiple rounds of open coding following the guidelines of Miles et al. (2014). These offer a little more structure and systematicity than the guidelines given by Smith et al. (2009) or van Manen (2014), but are still philosophically compatible with my study. According to Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014), such structure (offering a firm guide while being open to possibility) is also useful for inquiry in arts-related research. To begin, I coded for processes (actions), emotions (felt meanings) and descriptions (topics), using the software *Atlas.ti* (Figure 3.5a). I repeated this 2–3 times for each example, coding snippets that I had missed or re-coding snippets in light of my shifting understanding; this iterative coding techniques is known as the constant comparison method, and though it originated in grounded theory, it is now a cornerstone of qualitative analysis in general (Miles et al., 2014, p. 285). I also created memos throughout my analysis, which included thoughts that emerged while I was actively analyzing as well as those that struck me while I was doing other things (Figure 3.5d). As with all my notes from this study, I kept these in Evernote; this was useful, given that Evernote automatically synchronizes notes across devices, such that I could enter a note on my smartphone and later access it on my laptop.

Next I sought to develop a narrative description (Miles et al., 2014, pp. 91) or anecdote (van Manen, 2014, pp. 256–260) to express each example. Drawing from
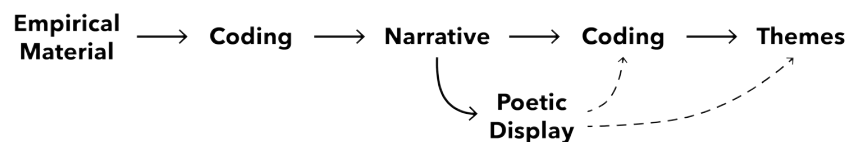
Figure 3.4: Flow chart summarizing the analysis

(a) First-round coding

(b) Interview notes

(c) List of story beats

(d) Memoing
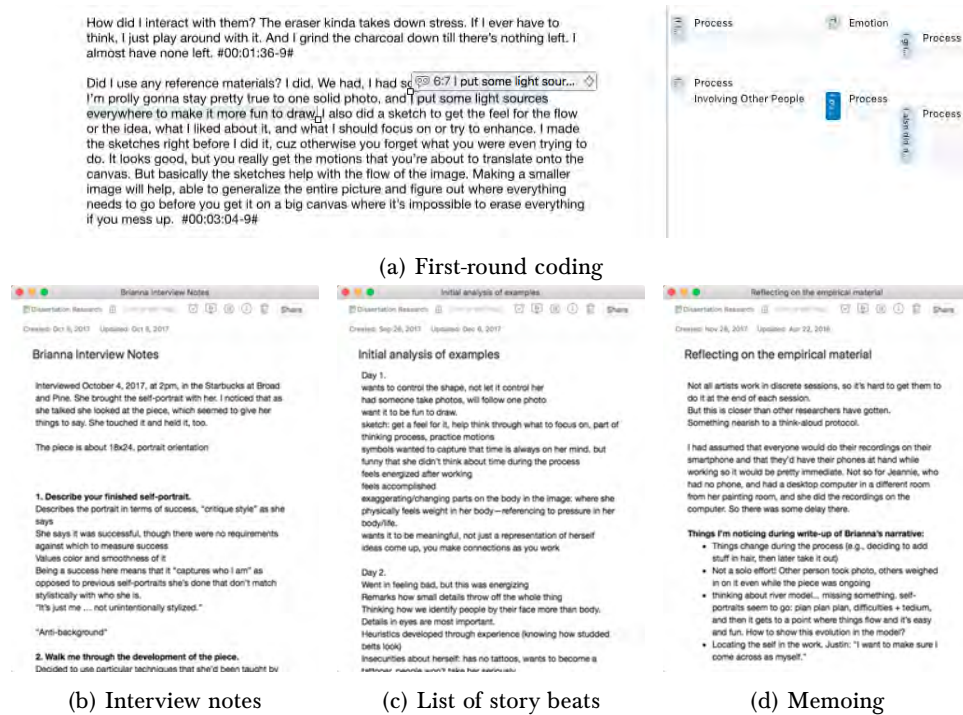
Figure 3.5: Details of initial analysis, drawn from Brianna's example

the coded snippets, I first listed each "story beat" (Coyne, 2015) in an Evernote note (Figure 3.5c). This helped me see the role that the various aspects of the artist's account played in the creation of their self-portrait. Building on this list, I then crafted a narrative of about 1,000 words from the artist's point of view. As much as possible, I used the artist's own words, drawn from their session interviews and the follow-up interview. However, elements were reordered and edited for clarity. After a first draft of this narrative, I revisited the empirical material to see if anything was missing. I then revised the narrative as needed. In phenomenology of practice, such narratives are considered the main research product (van Manen, 2014, pp. 256–260); however, to aid in the communication of my findings and to more clearly contribute to the literature, I conducted additional analyses, which are described below.

I referred to the visual material as necessary to support my understanding of the

verbal material. I had originally planned to perform a full, standalone compositional interpretation (Rose, 2016) of this visual material, but that did not prove useful. This, I think, was because answering my research questions did not hinge on the particular compositional changes that occurred as each piece was developed, nor on the compositional differences between each self-portrait. (I would suggest that such analysis may be useful for ontic descriptions, but perhaps not ontological ones.) In the end, my experience manifested the assertion of Miles et al. (2014, p. 98) that "analytic memoing of the frozen, captured image is a more appropriate form of exploration than detailed breakdowns of components such as color, contrast, and composition." However, reading the work of Rose (2016) and Taylor (1957) did help me better notice and be able to articulate the formal aspects of artworks (e.g., color, spatial organization, content, light, shape) according to the vocabulary used by artists and art theorists, even if a formal breakdown was not conducted. As Taylor (1957, p. 131) remarks: "A greater knowledge of an artist's production can sharpen our awareness of the subtleties of his vocabulary and often reveal new content which to our direct view may have been inaccessible."

Initially, each participant's experience was analyzed individually so that I could immerse myself fully in that individual example; thus, analysis began as soon as one participant's complete example was gathered. Once all the examples were gathered and analyzed, the different examples were compared and contrasted through iterative consideration of individuals and the group. This is the strategy employed in interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009), which has been validated in information science (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015); it is compatible with the principles of cross-case analysis described by Miles et al. (2014), and it makes sense in the context of my phenomenology-of-practice study as a way to expose the tension between the individual and the group, as counseled by van Manen (2014). Through this analysis, I was able to appreciate what made each case unique.

To make the narratives more quickly accessible, I used a technique that Miles et al. (2014, pp. 185–187) refer to as a *poetic display*. In essence, this is a poem version of

the narrative. According to Miles et al., this technique affords quick digestion without sacrificing pathic power. On one hand, it is simply a poem that can stand alone; on the other, it is a succinct way to display research findings. Still, Miles et al. (2014, p. 187) note: "Classic literary poetry can stand on its own, but research as poetry almost always needs some type of introductory framing or supplemental narrative for the reader to contextualize or expand on the artwork." These poetic displays may also serve to furnish additional insights; Elgin (2017b) and Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2014) describe how considering findings through diverse forms of human expression may reveal additional meanings to researchers as well as their audiences. Valerie Janesick (2015), in *Contemplative Qualitative Inquiry*, agrees, saying that "poetry can be used by qualitative researchers to portray the meaning of the literature review, the design, the data and the final story" (p. 35). In my case, creating the poetic displays helped me see what was most important and unique about each example.

To more clearly answer RQ3 (*What is the nature of the lived experience of self-portraiture?*), I needed to make the themes of these narratives more accessible and communicable. To do so, I drew out the themes that characterized each example and the experiences as a group. To do so, I conducted a new round of thematic analysis on the narratives. Inevitably my sense of what was most potent in each narrative was influenced by the poetic display—not unexpected, given the discussion in the previous paragraph. I used the coding techniques described above, followed by phenomenological theme analysis (van Manen, 2014), to discern these themes. I conducted the coding using pen on paper rather than *Atlas.ti* (Figure 3.6). This was for a simple practical reason: My student license for the software had expired. I did not view this as a shortcoming, however; the narratives were concise enough that coding by hand was neither burdensome nor hampering. After coding by hand, I compiled the codes and collected them into themes using text documents on my computer and a handwritten notebook. This was an iterative process. Eventually I settled on a number of themes, which I grouped according to those found in all the examples, those found in most (at least four), and those found in few (three or fewer) but which were nonetheless intriguing. With these
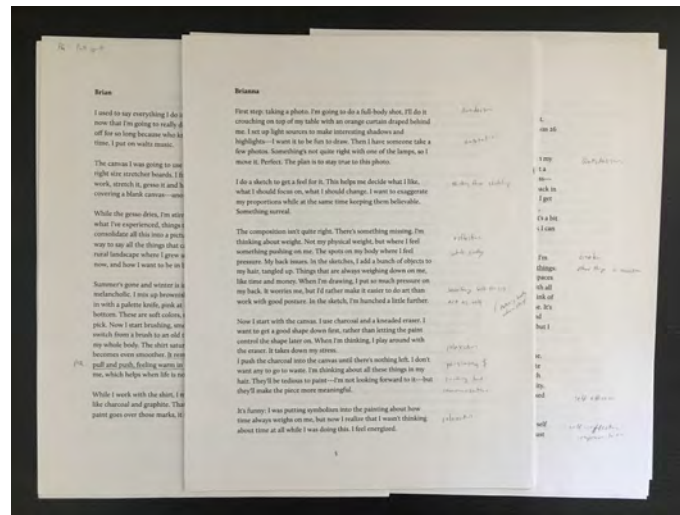
Figure 3.6: Coding the narratives by hand

categories in mind, I also spent time reflecting on what made each case unique.

After this, I revisited the framework of documentation that I developed in response to RQ2. I worked to determine whether the themes I discerned corresponded to the aspects of this framework (Foundation, Obstacles and Document), and whether any were unclassifiable in the framework. Last, I returned again to the original transcripts to see if I saw anything new that I had overlooked in my prior analyses. I did not directly employ this framework in writing the narratives or conducting the theme analysis. Still, its principles (e.g., that documentation is done with a purpose) were likely working in the background, as a hermeneutic lens. There is a danger with such a method: A pre-defined theory may impose undue assumptions on an analysis, such as creating blindspots or overemphasizing trivialities (Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 2014). And while a Husserlian method would attempt to "bracket out" all understandings prior to an analysis, a Heideggerian method disputes the very possibility of such a thing (van Manen, 2014); for van Manen (2014), a middle-ground solution is to articulate one's background and assumptions as much as possible. This strategy is also consonant with Maxwell's (2005) strategies for curbing validity threats.

By this point, I had also implicitly made some progress toward answering RQ4 (*What understanding is built through making a self-portrait?*). As described in §2.2.1, the building of understanding involves some change in a person's grasping of a coherent web of information. This may not be readily observable from the outside or at any given temporal state. In answering this question, I was concerned with how my participants changed throughout and after making their self-portrait. I looked, for example, for evidence of coming to grips with some past experience, or their understanding their own ambitions in a different light. I was not primarily interested in the *content* of these understandings, but rather their structure and how they arose through information. I recognized that it was possible that some participants might exhibit no signs of having built understanding, and I was open to that possibility. In my analysis, I sought to identify understandings that were built and then attempted to trace how those understandings came about with information throughout the process of self-portraiture.

To address RQ4 head-on, I returned to the narratives with a phenomenological reflective analysis (van Manen, 2014). This "is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning that is driven by the epoché and the reduction" (van Manen, 2014). *Epoché* and *reduction* are phenomenological terms of art; van Manen (2014) defines the epoché as involving "wonder, openness, concreteness and approaching" (p. 223) wherein the researcher is challenged "to be receptive and awakened to a profound sense of wonder" (p. 224); the reduction is the return to the phenomenon (from the Latin *reducere*, or *to go back to*), which involves comparing the phenomenon to related but different ones to better understand the "whatness" of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014, pp. 230–236). In this analysis, I read the narratives individually several times and took notes, considered questions such as: What understandings were built in this example? How? Was building understanding intentional or accidental? Was it attributable to any particular actions or ways of relating to information? I compared and contrasted the examples at hand, considering whether there may be multiple paths to the same form of understanding. In all this, I had an eye toward

what elements of self-portraiture were contributive to understanding. The discussion resulting from this work, as a response to RQ4, can be considered something of an exegetical companion to the narratives developed in response to RQ3.

Finally, researcher reflexivity (the investigation of the researcher as a self in order to better understand and challenge one's perspective and biases) is an important part of all qualitative research, and particularly so in arts-related and phenomenological research (Pithouse, 2011; Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; van Manen, 2014). To this end, I wrote researcher memos (Maxwell, 2005) as I collected the empirical material and worked on this analysis as a way of identifying and dealing with possible validity threats and tracking the development of my findings. I kept a research log through free-writing, and I also utilized the prompts given by Maxwell (2005), such as the "Researcher Identity Memo" (pp. 27–28), which is reproduced below in §3.7.

3.5.6 Outcomes

The primary results of the analysis were the narratives of approximately 1,000 words that express each particular experience of self-portraiture. From these narratives, I drew out an analysis of several themes that emerged, as described above.

Findings presented in narrative form are typical and respected in phenomenological research (Smith et al., 2009) and other qualitative methodologies, such as ethnography and ethnomethodology (Sandelowski, 1991). My findings took this form because, in the phenomenological paradigm, it is assumed that the essence or structure (what phenomenologists call *eidos*) of an experience (in this case self-portraiture) is not wholly articulable in clean, conceptual terms. As van Manen (2014, p. 46) counsels, "When words of conceptual language seem to fall short of the felt meaning, then this meaning may need to be addressed indirectly by means of . . . anecdote, example, or story." In support of this form of research findings, Bruner (1986) argues that narrativity and logical analysis are separate and complementary modes of human cognition; narrative meaning contributes lived context to the detached accounts of logical reasoning. Similarly, Worth (2008) argues that narratives afford a specific

form of knowledge, narrative knowledge, which connotes knowing what something is like rather than simply "knowing how" or "that." However, as described in the previous section, I also developed a thematic analysis to make these narratives more accessible and more clearly contribute to the literature. Though "words of conceptual language" are not omnipotent, I still find them useful.

I additionally presented my findings in the form of an on-campus art exhibition, as well as a permanent online gallery accessible to non-experts. The on-campus exhibition, *Stories in Self-Portraits,* was on display in the Rincliffe Gallery in Drexel University's Main Building from April 2 to July 27, 2018, and was facilitated by employees in University Communications (Downey, 2018). The online gallery will be maintained for as long as possible at *selfportraiture.info.* In keeping with the interest in public engagement of arts-informed research (see §3.3.2), these efforts also serve as an entrypoint to this project for interested publics. This was noted in the informed consent paperwork, and I discussed it with my participants throughout the development of the website.

3.6 QUALITY

Scholars have traditionally assessed qualitative research according to the values promulgated by the natural science tradition: generalizability, validity and reliability (Maxwell, 2005). These values originated from a positivist worldview which may seem incompatible with qualitative research that operates within an interpretivist paradigm (Yardley, 2000). Still, qualitative research must be assessable and assessed according to some standards. To this end, some value can still be found in the notions of generalizability, validity and reliability, though they must be conceptualized somewhat differently than they are within positivism.

3.6.1 Generalizability

Generalizability is often conflated with *statistical generalizability*, which is never the goal of any single qualitative study. This is because, outside the positivist paradigms, it

cannot be postulated with certainty that a single truth exists, so the notion of generalizing findings to an entire population is impractical. However, qualitative studies—even those involving single cases—can strive for *analytical generalizability*, as described by Yin (2014). In this way, findings from qualitative research should be assessed for their transferability to other specific cases—and perhaps other contexts—on a case-by-case basis (Maxwell, 2005). This analogical mode of reasoning, Swedberg (2014) points out, is also the most common way to proceed in legal science.

Thus, the value of a given qualitative study rests largely on the detail in which the context and cases are described. To be sure, a single qualitative study can still present a theoretical contribution (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Still, there is a temptation to assume that the fewer participants a study has, the smaller its possible contribution. This is not necessarily true; even the study of a single case can reveal significant theoretical findings on its own (Yin, 2012, 2014). Moreover, several single-cases can be considered in concert to formulate more general theories. A strategy for this type of theory-building from multiple case studies is presented by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007). Based on this, my findings, which synthesize several discrete cases, achieve analytical generalizability, particularly through the attention I give to describing the context and particularities of each case.

3.6.2 Validity

Validity is often dismissed by qualitative researchers when understood as reflective of a single, objective truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, qualitative researchers should view validity as reflective of trustworthiness of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Riessman, 1993) or verisimilitude of the findings (Bruner, 1986). For Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness involves credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability; as I have conceptualized quality in this study, transferability refers to generalizability (see the previous section), and dependability refers to reliability (see the next section). For Bruner (1986), verisimilitude is a matter of structural coherence in the findings. Similarly, Yardley (2000) offers flexible principles for evaluating novel

qualitative research: context-sensitivity, philosophical commitment, transparency, coherence and importance. Researchers can improve their work on these dimensions by detail in how they go about collecting and interpreting the empirical material and by making their empirical material available to other researchers when possible (Riessman, 1993; Yardley, 2000). When phenomenological research achieves this goal, readers should experience resonance with the written account of the study, which is known as the "phenomenological nod" (van Manen, 1990).

Another way to conceptualize validity is asking whether the study measures what the researcher claims was measured (Babbie, 2007). Two forms of validity described by Babbie (2007) that are relevant to my study are face validity—the surface-level common sense of the findings—and construct validity—demonstrating logical relationships among the concepts under consideration. Both of these are necessary for a study to be analytically generalizable.

Offering a slightly different perspective, Maxwell (2005) discusses validity in terms of the extent to which the researcher has given alternative explanations a fighting chance. This suggests an interpretative dialectic, which is compatible with the nature of hermeneutic-phenomenological research. Maxwell encourages research designs that identify validity threats, emphasizing that such threats are heavily contextualized in qualitative research and therefore must be specific rather than general. One example of a validity threat he names is researcher bias—selecting empirical material that support a preconceived theory, rather than letting the theory emerge from the empirical material idiographically. Other tactics Maxwell suggests for maximizing validity include collecting rich material, searching for discrepant evidence, triangulating with empirical material from multiple sources and modalities, comparing findings between sources of empirical material and to those in the literature that may be applicable, and carefully and completely describing the context and background, values, etc., of the researcher.

My study was designed to achieve these values of validity. It incorporated multiple sources and types of empirical material for the sake of triangulation (Maxwell, 2005),

and the analytical method ensured the plausibility (van Manen, 2014), verisimilitude (Bruner, 1986), and face and construct validity (Babbie, 2007) of my findings. In this dissertation I have sought to provide "tracks" for my findings, thereby further helping establish their trustworthiness.

3.6.3 Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research is "a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same results each time" (Babbie, 2007, p. 143). In my view, in research involving human experience, the possibility of studying the "same object" as before is dubious; therefore, it may be more productive to ask whether *similar* results would emerge from a study of a *similar* object. Reliability can also be considered in terms of analysis: If the empirical material from a study was analyzed anew, would the same findings emerge? Given their ever-contingent nature, it is unlikely that the exact same findings would emerge, but they certainly should not contradict the original findings.

I contend that my study achieves reliability. First, I employed a methodology that I have used before in research that has been peer-reviewed and published in academic journals. Additionally, my analysis entailed several rounds and participants; I revisited my earlier analyses as I conducted my later analyses to be sure that I have analyzed all the empirical material reliably.

Finally, van Manen (2014) offers some guidelines for the assessment of phenomenological research that may be brought to bear in considering the pathic side of my findings. A key consideration is whether the analysis was done using experientially descriptive accounts—that is, ones that present things as they happened and in detail, rather than in terms of generalized opinions (van Manen, 2014). Beyond this, van Manen defines some of the characteristics of exemplary phenomenological scholarship: The text should offer new, deep and surprising insights; and for as much as it reveals, it should impute an ineffable massiveness that remains unrevealed; it should incite questions (van Manen, 2014). Van Manen (2014, pp. 355–356) also pro-

vides a detailed list of questions for readers to consider in judging phenomenological work; these questions are reproduced in Appendix E (Evaluating Phenomenological Research).

3.7 RESEARCHER IDENTITY MEMO

In interpretivist research, it is common, even expected, for the researcher to discuss their background and perspective (Maxwell, 2005; Williamson & Johanson, 2018). This is because researchers are always part of the worlds they study, and they interpret phenomena through their perspective (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Van Maanen, 1988). This is an explicit feature of hermeneutic phenomenological research (van Manen, 2014) and art-related research (Pithouse, 2011). In philosophy of science, it has been argued that a person's situated perspective is inescapable, and thus "strong objectivity" can be approached not by denying one's situation, but by explicating it (Harding, 2015). Maxwell (2005) provides a number of specific memoing exercises for this sort of explication, which he also sees as a means of curbing validity threats.

This reflexivity can strengthen a researcher's understanding of the phenomenon of interest, of their methods and of themselves (Pithouse, 2011). When done throughout the research process (beginning before the recruitment of participants), it can also foster empathy with the participants (Pithouse, 2011). Thinking about my own history, values and beliefs helped cultivate a shared sense of purpose with my participants, which is important in interpretivist research (Williamson & Johanson, 2018). As a record of my reflexive activities, here I articulate my researcher identity (one of the techniques Maxwell, 2005, proffers). Additionally, an account of my own example of self-portraiture can be found in Appendix B (My Own Self-Portrait).

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When I was growing up, drawing was my biggest hobby. I have fond memories of lying on the floor in front of the television with my sketchpad. In high school, I started painting. As I've gotten older, I've picked up other hobbies, and now I rarely

draw or paint. Still, art is part of me: I am drawn to visual patterns in the world; I take photographs; I frequent art museums; and my apartment is enlivened with the work of artists I admire. I also have several of my own pieces hanging up, and sometimes I think they're taunting me.

My background, no doubt, directed me toward self-portraiture as a research topic. I didn't choose it—or even artwork—from the outset, but rather I was whisked this way. (As my PhD application statements of purpose attests, I thought I would do something quantitative with social media data.) Perhaps this can be understood through the Zen Buddhist concept of *home-leaving:* As a young man, the Buddha left home in search of a way to relieve the world of suffering. After years of study in different traditions, he found the answer: he had to go back home. He had to pour himself into the practice he already knew as a child but had forgotten: straightforward, open-hearted being. There he had a great awakening. In my case, I pursued communications, Spanish, education and linguistics. I thought I wanted to study something modern-technological. Really, though, I was forgetting something that I already knew: art. Deborah Turner's guidance gave me the space to return home, and the lotus there bloomed when she recommended I read the work of Kiersten Latham and Jenna Hartel. My philosophical understanding was deepened through reading the work of Mark Johnson and Martin Heidegger, both of whom argue that understanding art is central to the project of understanding being. Moreover, art represented a sizable research opportunity in information science, as most of the research to date has focused on linguistic information.

The story of how I came to study information experience is similar. As an introvert, I've always had a rich inner life, which may have predisposed me to find the notion of inner life itself interesting as an object of study. More recently, I've come to the conclusion that the inner life is a necessary object of study: Studying experience, it seems to me, is the only way to make progress on the "hard problem"—the question of how subjective experience and point of view arise from material processes. Studying experience, to me, involves recognizing non-propositional, embodied ways of knowing

as epistemologically legitimate. Happily, information experience is also a budding research area in information science, as part of a wider investigation of the outcomes of information seeking.

After I decided to study the artistic information experience, I knew I had to limit the domain for the purposes of conducting a study. I decided to do this by genre, and I chose self-portraiture because I was interested in human meaning-making and understanding, and I assumed that self-portraiture would speak the loudest about these themes. Moreover, the choice was fortuitous: First, the selfie is a phenomenon of cultural import and, increasingly, academic interest; research into the conceptual underpinnings of self-portraiture will, I hope, further ground research on the selfie. And second, self-portraiture has been found to be psychologically therapeutic; a better understanding of self-portraiture could lead to increased well-being for people in suffering.

This last point leads me to the overarching goal of my research: to contribute to human flourishing. As a human being, I want to make the world a better place in whatever ways I can. Interestingly, this was Heidegger's mission, too; he wanted to demonstrate how individuals could be true to themselves in the face of the anonymous "they" of society that can so easily sweep us up. And like Heidegger, I believe that, dazzled by the wonders of modern technology, we have neglected our spirit; and I believe that art—indeed any craft that encourages poiesis—has the capacity to nourish the spirit. Moreover, I believe that technology and art are not incommensurable; rather, I think, eventually, we will be able to incorporate the meditative sensibility of art-making into digital technology.

I am aware that my project—including its domain of interest, its conceptual underpinnings, its methodology, its structure and its aspirations—is atypical of research in information science. As such, some may question the extent to which my work will be able to contribute to my stated aims. But I think is worth trying.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

> Off the trail, rhododendrons are
> scattered through the trees like
> lanterns, calling me out of myself.
>
> _Poverty Creek Journal_
> THOMAS GARDNER, 2014

In this chapter, I provide answers to my research questions. I begin with the conceptual questions RQ1 and RQ2. Given my phenomenological methods, at points these findings may seem reminiscent of a literature review; however, whereas in Chapter 2 I reviewed literature (mostly from information science) to frame my study, here the literature surveyed (mostly from other fields) serves to fill in this frame. In response to RQ1, I discuss the self-portrait and the selfie as document genres, drawing mostly on art history and the philosophy of art (§4.1). In short, to make a self-portrait is to call one out of oneself, much like Gardner's rhododendrons in the quote above. To explore this further and to respond to RQ2, I develop a first-person model of documentation (§4.2). This can be applied even beyond self-portraiture, to other experiences of document and information creation.

Next, responding to RQ3, I move to the empirical examples of lived experiences of self-portraiture that I collected. These illustrate and extend the model I developed in response to RQ2. The narrative examples can be found in Appendix A, while in §4.3 I present a number of themes that characterize the experience of making a self-portrait based on these examples. These themes include communicating, taking breaks and stepping back, tension and relaxation, and more. Lastly, in response to RQ4, I describe some of the ontic understandings built in the creation of a self-portrait, which include understanding the artistic process and self-understanding (§4.4). Beyond responding to the question of understanding in this domain, my response to RQ4 gives a method for analyzing cases of understanding in terms of information.

4.1 RQ1: SELF-PORTRAIT AS DOCUMENT

In this section, I develop a conceptualization of the self-portrait as a document. This is an important task, as Day (2016b, p. 11) observes: "Asking 'what is a document?' today is asking 'how can one think and be?'" As discussed in the previous chapter, the conceptualization here is achieved phenomenologically through conceptual methods.

As established in §2.1.3.1, documents sit in referential systems and thereby furnish evidence and meaning. Thus asking in what way something is a document is asking about how it references and how it furnishes evidence and meaning.

Asking such questions through phenomenological inquiry begins with the phenomenon's ontic manifestations—its "average everydayness"—and then plumbs deeper (Heidegger, 1927/2010). The discipline of history explores ontic manifestations (Heidegger, 1927/2010; van Manen, 2014); thus, on the topic of the self-portrait, art history can offer a view of the ontic. Commensurately, this section begins with an overview of how the self-portrait has been considered in European and American art history before turning to more philosophical modes of inquiry for deeper insight into the phenomenon.

4.1.1 Self-Portraits in Art History

As defined in the *Collins English Dictionary*, a portrait is an artistic representation of a person, especially one in which the face predominates (Portrait, 2014), and a self-portrait is a portrait made by the same person who is represented (Self-portrait, 2014).

Of all the academic research involving self-portraiture, most of it has been within art history, the discipline dedicated to the study of the historical and stylistic development of art. There has been much art-historical research on particular self-portraits and self-portraitists, but the self-portrait has rarely been discussed as a genre; rather, art historians have reported on isolated examples of self-portraits without reflecting on what they mean or what makes them self-portraits (Lucie-Smith, 1987). Edward Lucie-Smith (1987) considers this a surprising state of affairs given the proliferation of self-portraiture over the past several centuries. Prior to Lucie-Smith's writing, the only trea-

tise on self-portraiture was Ludwig Goldscheider's (1937) *Five Hundred Self-Portraits.* Since then, three notable works have discussed self-portraiture as an art-historical genre: a study of the emergence and meaning of Renaissance self-portraiture (Woods-Marsden, 1998); an art-criticism discussion of self-portraiture (Cumming, 2009); and a cultural history of self-portraiture (Hall, 2014).

Though there are a few examples (3–4) of self-portraiture from Antiquity, art historians agree that the genre of the self-portrait emerged in the 15th century (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998). Woods-Marsden (1998) writes of this emergence as part of asserting art as an intellectual activity (not just a manual craft) and, concomitantly, the artist as a dignified member of society. This was related to the development of humanism, a secular philosophy that harnessed the classical dictum that "man is the measure of all things" (Woods-Marsden, 1998). Early self-portraits were depictions of the artist within a larger, typically religious work, functioning as a sort of signature or testament to the artist's skill (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998).

The genre of autonomous (standalone) self-portraits was invented in 15th-century Italy, but it soon burgeoned in northern Europe as well (Woods-Marsden, 1998). Since then, many well-known artists practiced self-portraiture—two early-modern artists known specifically for their self-portraits are Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998). The motivations for these early self-portraits are not known, but it is known that Rembrandt's were used educationally, copied by the artist's students (Woods-Marsden, 1998). There is no evidence that self-portraits were ever commissioned; some, however, were given as gifts in exchange for favors (Woods-Marsden, 1998). For example, Montaigne (1580/1910, p. 101) writes that the king of Sicily presented the king of France with a self-portrait. Self-portraiture became even more common in the 19th and 20th centuries, with many artists becoming known specifically for their self-portraits, such as Vincent van Gogh, Egon Schiele, Edvard Munch, Frida Kahlo and Pablo Picasso (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998).

Art historians emphasize that since the dawn of modernity, virtually all artists

have practiced self-portraiture at least once (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998). The reason given is convenience: oneself is the subject closest at hand (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998). Beyond that, Cumming (2009) and Woods-Marsden (1998) have contributed to a historical theory of self-portraiture, describing how self-portraiture helped establish the myth of the artistic genius and was influenced by the modern sense of individuality which emerged in the Renaissance. However, art history has not sought to develop a more detailed theory of the genre (e.g., accounting for the motivations for creating self-portraits). Rather, most work in art history focuses on the historical developments that supported self portraiture, such as the fabrication of mirrors discussed by Hall (2014), and the reception and provenance of particular self-portraits. As a result, art history does not seem well-equipped to discuss challenges to the genre of the self-portrait, which are becoming more commonplace today.

An example is the work of Cindy Sherman, an American artist whose œuvre consists of photographs of herself in various guises. Art historians seem to regard these as self-portraits, as evidenced in the collection of art-historical and -critical essays edited by Johanna Burton (2006) and scholarly essays such as that of Dalton, Lee, Goicolea, and Brown (2000). Still, Sherman emphatically claims her works are *not* self-portraits, as she explained in a *New York Times* interview: "I feel I'm anonymous in my work. When I look at the pictures, I never see myself; they aren't self-portraits. Sometimes I disappear" (Collins, 1990). To understand how this could be the case, we can turn to accounts in the philosophy of art, which has seen some theorization around portraiture that can be applied to self-portraiture. This constitutes a turn from the ontic toward the ontological.

4.1.2 Self-Portraits in the Philosophy of Art

As intimated in the previous paragraph, it may not always be clear whether a work of art is a self-portrait. Recently, some philosophers of art have sought to establish what makes a portrait, and these discussions can be brought to bear on the question of the self-portrait.

Cynthia Freeland (2010) offers three necessary and sufficient conditions for a portrait: First, it must show a recognizable physical body; second, it must show a sense of inner life; third, the subject must pose for the artist. Freeland (2010) encapsulates these conditions in defining the portrait as "an image that presents a recognizably distinct individual who has emotional or conscious states, and who is able to participate in the creative process by posing" (p. 284). Thus, for Freeland (2010), sketches made in a life drawing session, people in commercials and CCTV footage do not qualify as portraits. Paolo Spinicci (2009), drawing on a different literature and line of argumentation, largely agrees, except that he says a portrait need not be posed but can merely look as if it is posed. Thus, whereas for Freeland (2010) there can be no such thing as an animal portrait (assuming that animals cannot really pose), for Spinicci (2009) this is no problem. Moreover, Spinicci (2009) suggests that we should identify portraits based on how they are used, rather than merely their formal aspects.

Hans Maes (2015) responds to these accounts. First, he argues that Freeland's (2010) account is overly restrictive. Agreeing with Spinicci (2009), he says that not all portraits are posed, such as the famous portrait of Che Guevara. Maes (2015) also questions Freeland's "inner life" condition, arguing that deathbed portraits cannot show inner life because there is none, and nor can those portraits not showing the face. Maes (2015) points out examples of very abstract portraits that do not seem to depict a recognizable human body and yet still qualify as portraits. Further, Maes (2015) suggests that the pose may not be enough to qualify a portrait by giving the example of a tourist photo in front of the Eiffel Tower; an individual is recognizable, as is their inner life, and the photo is certainly posed, and yet we may be hesitant to call the image a portrait. Responding to Spinicci's (2009) point about usage, Maes (2015) gives the example of a bust thought to be a portrait of an ancient philosopher and which was used as such for centuries, but which was recently discovered to be a general depiction of old age. In Maes' (2015) view, it should stop being regarded as a portrait on Spinicci's account, and yet that has not happened.

Based on these criticisms, Maes (2015, p. 315) proposes his own account of the

portrait based on the artist's successful intention to create a portrait, which requires that they have a concept of the nature of portraits which matches that held by a group of prior portrait painters and that the artist seeks to realize that concept in their work. Maes (2015) argues that necessary and sufficient conditions need not be specified, and that this account can incorporate other philosophers' accounts felicitously. He offers several "portrait-relevant features" that may be part of the concept of the portrait, including the revelation of the subject's looks, inner life and social standing.

Philosophers of portraiture do not seem to have made special comment on *self*-portraiture, but following Maes' (2015) account one may posit that self-portraitists seek to realize a concept of the self-portrait that they hold in accord with a tradition of prior self-portraitists. It would seem that the appearance and/or inner life of the artist is what is presented in the self-portrait, and that this inheres through a pose. This explains why Cindy Sherman's works are not self-portraits: They do not present *her* inner life, but rather those of her invented characters.

4.1.3 Conceptualizing the Self-Portrait as a Document

Further insight into the self-portrait can be gained by considering it as a document. Doing so will show how it sits within systems of reference and how it furnishes evidence and meaning.

4.1.3.1 Self-Portraits in Systems of Reference

As theorized since Otlet (1934), a document is part of a system of reference. Considering a self-portrait as a document means, first, regarding it as something situated within a system of reference. Information science has generally been concerned with information rooted in particular technologies, such as in books or on computers, but systems of reference can also be conceptualizations of broader practices (Frohmann, 2004), such as religious iconography (Walsh, 2012). Indeed, a document can be said to be situated within any number of systems of reference, depending on which aspects of it are deemed relevant for the purpose at hand.

In memory institutions, self-portraits are described according to controlled vocab-

ularies along with other cultural objects along dimensions such as geography, physical characteristics and subject matter (Baca, Harpring, Lanzi, McRae, & Whiteside, 2006). Memory institutions' collections are often heterogeneous, comprising far more than merely self-portraits (or even just portraits), and so these vocabularies (e.g., the Categories for the Description of Works of Art developed by the J. Paul Getty Trust) are not specific to self-portraiture (Baca & Harpring, 2016). Thus they situate self-portraits within a broad system of cultural organization (including other artworks as well as historical periods, geographic locations, etc.).

Self-portraits have been classified specifically in the field of art history. One mode of such classification is according to the format of the portrait. There are several conventional portrait formats: profile (the face depicted from the side), three-quarter view (the face depicted on an angle), half-length (or bust, where the head and shoulders are depicted, often straight-on), and full-length (the whole body depicted) (Simon, 2013). Next, self-portraits have been classified according to the number of people in the portrait. Self-portraits depicting only one person (the artist) are referred to as autonomous (Woods-Marsden, 1998) or independent (Hall, 2014) self-portraits. Those depicting more than one person comprise two categories: First, face-in-the-crowd (Woods-Marsden, 1998) or bystander (Hall, 2014) self-portraits depict the artist in a minor position amidst a larger scene, often of a religious nature, while multiple self-portraits depict the artist alongside other people, such as a spouse or other family members (Hall, 2014). Lastly, self-portraits may be categorized according to the activities depicted. Artists may depict themselves at work as artists (often showing their implements, canvas, hands or mirror), or simply posing (possibly in costume) (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998). It may be noted that contemporary self-portraits sometimes defy these traditional classification schemes, such as those that depict the artist in abstract shapes and fields of color (Hall, 2014).

4.1.3.2 Evidence in the Self-Portrait

Next, considering a self-portrait as a document means considering how it provides evidence, and of what. Self-portraits could be said to provide evidence of many things, including the artist's technical abilities and the materials that were available in a particular setting. Here, however, I will focus on how self-portraits provide evidence of the self, seeing as the capacity to provide this kind of evidence is what distinguishes the self-portrait from other artistic genres.

Prima facie, one might assume that a self-portrait provides evidence of the appearance of an artist. However, as Cumming (2009, pp. 4–5) notes, self-portraits

> may be less true to appearance than portraits. But they are not *just* portraits, for all that art history often treats them as a subset; and they often specialize in other kinds of truth. Artists have portrayed themselves, improbably, as wounded, starving or unconscious beneath a tree, as a baby being born or a severed head dripping blood, as younger or older or even of the opposite sex. . . . But no matter how fanciful, flattering or deceitful the image, it will always reveal something deep and incontrovertible (and distinct from a portrait) . . . the truth of how the artist hoped to be seen and known, how he wished to represent (and see) himself.

As Freeland (2010) writes, any portrait must do more than simply convey the external appearance of a person; it must show the subject's inner life. In the case of the self-portrait, this "inner life" may include how the person felt, what they wanted to show, how they wanted to see and be seen, their struggles regarding fame, their impressions of their work and their thoughts about mortality (Freeland, 2010).

This sort of evidence can be understood through the framework developed by Goodman (1976) for the philosophical understanding of art. Goodman begins with the premise that we use symbols in perceiving, understanding and constructing the worlds of our experience. He views artworks as entities composed of symbols, which sit in relation to other symbols in the world; thus they classify aspects of reality for us, as do such things as scientific theories and what makes up common, ordinary knowledge. In this way, artwork requires interpretation, which amounts to understanding how artworks perform reference. Art does not provide representation in the sense of resemblance; rather, it references through denotation and/or exemplification. Through

denotation, art constitutes a pictorial label for its subject (e.g., *The Mona Lisa* denotes the sitter); through exemplification, art is a sample or has particular aspects of some entity or concept (e.g., *The Mona Lisa* exemplifies intrigue). It is the notion of exemplification that explains how abstract and non-objective art, such as instrumental music, can be meaningful even though they do not represent or denote anything that can be described through propositional statements (Goodman, 1976). As a symbol system— Goodman hesitates to call it a "language" (cf. p. xii)—a work of art is so semantically and syntactically dense and symbolically replete as to defy clean analysis; rather, in art, "familiarity is never complete and final" (Goodman, 1976, p. 260), which is what makes the work of art a site for questioning and the building of understanding.

Goodman's (1976) concepts of representation and expression can be related to the differing epistemic interpretations of documents discussed in §2.1.3.3. Representation correlates to Otlet's (1934) view of document as representation, where the document shows facts about the world. Expression relates to Briet's (1951/2006) and Buckland's (1997, 2014) view of document as index, where documents may be said to provide evidence through human-construed associations, including for things which are not explicitly depicted in the object. An illustration of this is given by Day (2016a), who discusses a photograph of an empty chair as a portrait of a deceased professor.

4.1.3.3   *Meaning of the Self-Portrait*

Documents have meaning (Buckland, 1997). This was described earlier in §2.1.3.3.

What does a self-portrait mean? One route to considering the meaning of human practices is through myth (Campbell, 1988; van Manen, 2014). In popular culture, the self-portrait is sometimes linked to the myth of Narcissus. For example, a 2010–11 exhibition of self-portraits at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts was titled *Narcissus in the Studio.* In Greek mythology (one rendition is given by Graves, 1955/2012, p. 276), Narcissus was a youthful hunter known for his beauty. One day a vengeful goddess lured him to a pond where he saw his own reflection and fell in love with it. Narcissus was unable to look away, and he eventually died there staring at the image

of himself, and in his place sprung up the narcissus flower. Connecting the work of artists (not limited to self-portraitists) to the Narcissus myth goes back to the 15th century, when the artist and writer Leon Battista Alberti presented this myth as the origin of painting in *On Painting* (Baskins, 1993). Alberti makes this connection because Narcissus was turned into a flower and "painting is the flower of all the arts" (as cited in Baskins, 1993, p. 25). To be sure, linking Narcissus to self-portraiture specifically is more immediately defensible. But does the meaning of the self-portrait stop at narcissism? Already we can answer in the negative: Recall the discussion above on self-portraiture as expressing the changing role of the artist in society, manifesting the new philosophy of humanism, and positioning artwork as the union of intellect and labor (Hall, 2014; Woods-Marsden, 1998).

Further insight still into the meaning of the self-portrait can be gleaned through etymological analysis, which is a mainstay of phenomenological inquiry (van Manen, 2014). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the accepted authority on the history of English words, *self-portrait* originated in English in 1831 as a transliteration of the German *Selbstbildnis* or *Selbstporträt. Selbst* is reflexive (meaning it refers to the agent of the phrase) which comes from the Old High German word for *master* (Kluge, 1891). The word *Bildnis* refers to a form, figure, effigy, painted likeness or example (Grimm & Grimm, 1860), while the word *Porträt* comes from the French *portrait.* Though *self-portrait* came to English through German, the English word *portrait* came directly from French (Portrait, 2016). It may be noted that the *-ure* of *(self-)portraiture* denotes an action or process which results in some product (ure, 2016).

The French *portrait* comes from the Latin verb *protrahere* (Portrait, 2016). The prefix *por-* (a variant of *pro-*) means forth, forward or outward (Pro, 2016), while *trahere* (from which come also the English words *train* and *tract*) means to drag something slowly or to draw something out in the passing of time, resulting in some consequence (Tract, 2016; Train, 2016). Thus *protrahere* has the sense of drawing forth, pulling out, bringing to light or prolonging (Lewis & Short, 1879).

If the primordial sense of the portrait is bringing something forth over time, then

the meaning of the *self*-portrait has to do with bringing *oneself* forth over time. This view suggests two things about gaining insight into self-portraiture: First, it should be regarded as a process rather than a product; and second, it should be considered from the first-person perspective of the artist.

These observations will be taken up in further detail in the coming sections. First, additional insight into the self-portrait can be gained by considering it in light of a contemporary, similar phenomenon: the selfie.

4.1.4   A Related Phenomenon: The Selfie

There seems to be some confusion between the selfie and the self-portrait. When I would speak of my dissertation topic (self-portraiture) to friends and acquaintances, they often assumed that I was talking about selfies. In published materials, examples abound of this confusion. For instance, in Philadelphia there was recently an art exhibition entitled *Veterans Empowered Through Art: The Six Week Selfie Project*, which presented self-portraits, not selfies (Huynh, 2017). Additionally, self-portraits by fine artists are now sometimes being described as selfies (e.g., Sooke, 2014). As it turns out, what does and doesn't count as a selfie is unclear and is subject to popular debate, as described in an article in *The Atlantic* by Adrienne LaFrance (2014). Some have argued that the selfie is an extension of the self-portrait (Lim, 2017; Mirzoeff, 2015; Rettberg, 2014). Even if this is the case, the two cannot simply be equated. For example, Jerry Saltz (2014) argues that selfies and self-portraits are sufficiently different because of the necessary skill and training involved.

Given this confusion, it is worth spending some time conceptualizing the selfie, and I do so here. Methodologically speaking, authors such as Introna and Ilharco (2004) and van Manen (2014) have said that studying phenomena that are similar to the target phenomenon can shed light on the nature of the target phenomenon; sometimes this is simply because the boundaries between the phenomena become clarified, and other times this is because studying a similar phenomenon brings to light some aspect of the target phenomenon that had gone unnoticed. Thus, I see this

discussion of the selfie as a way to ground a deeper understanding of the self-portrait.

The selfie is defined as a photograph that a person takes of themselves, generally with a smartphone, which is then shared with others online (Selfie, 2016). To this definition accounts have added that selfies capture spontaneous and casual moments which are shared immediately, and as such they promote a focus on the present (Peek, 2014; Saltz, 2014). The selfie developed alongside the smartphone, which integrates a camera with web sharing capabilities (Peek, 2014). It has been linked to consumer culture (Lim, 2017). Visually, selfies are distinct for some of their formal aspects: They are taken with a wide-angle lens, often with the photographer-subject's arm showing and at angles that belie an amateurish composition (Lüders, Prøitz, & Rasmussen, 2010; Peek, 2014; Saltz, 2014). Indeed part of the selfie's proliferation may be that it does not require technical skills (Lüders et al., 2010).

Another defining aspect of the selfie is what Jill Rettberg (2014) calls its serial nature. Producing a selfie generally involves a person taking multiple photos until they are satisfied (Lüders et al., 2010; Rettberg, 2014). Because of this, Lüders et al. (2010) see selfie-making as a "reflexive processes of visual self-authoring" (p. 947), while Rettberg (2014) suggests that this corresponds with one's never fully being able to capture or convey what you want to about yourself.

The selfie can be approached as a document in the same way that the self-portrait was in the previous section—in terms of reference, evidence and meaning.

First, reference. Both Levin (2016) and Mirzoeff (2015) suggest that a key aspect of the selfie is its networked nature; that is, the selfie is intrinsically situated in a broad system of reference. Indeed, sharing is part of the selfie's dictionary definition, as described above (Selfie, 2016). Daniel Rubinstein (2016) develops this point further, arguing that we should not think of selfies as referencing their subjects but as expressing the networks within which they sit. Similarly, Brooke Wendt (2016) mentions that selfies do not stand alone, but inherently include metadata, including hashtags and timestamps. For Levin (2016) and Rubinstein (2016), selfies are not merely images, but embodiments of relationships. On this view, the uniqueness of the selfie is that it

is self-same across many iterations on various screens and devices, wherein the self is articulated anew in each image, and thus each selfie is also self-similar to other selfies (Rubinstein, 2016). Along this vein, Paul Frosh (2015) has argued that a selfie is more than just a representation, because one cannot recognize a selfie *just* by looking at what it represents. Rather, Frosh (2015) says that recognizing an image as a selfie requires people to "make inferences about the nondepictive technocultural conditions in which the image was made" (p. 1608) and to have been socialized into reading such images.

Of what does the selfie furnish evidence? Pursuant to the accounts given in the previous paragraph, selfies seem to provide evidence about technology and networks. To these, Aaron Hess (2015) adds the photographer-subject's bodily self and surroundings. Of all these, though, Wendt (2014) suggests that the selfie predominantly provides evidence of the photographer-subject's external appearance, minimizing the non-visual aspects of the person (e.g., their inner life). This is perhaps most clearly the case with so-called medical selfies, which have been used to track progress on burn healing and other health issues (Ray & Nikkhah, 2015). Still, Qiu, Lu, Yang, Qu, and Zhu (2015) found that certain personality traits, such as agreeableness and neuroticism, can be ascertained through viewing a selfie. Zhao and Zappavigna (2017) offer a differing account, arguing that the most salient aspect of the selfie is not the representation of the self, but rather the image's capacity for evoking different perspectives (i.e., emphasizing intersubjectivity), inviting onlookers to look not at the photographer-subject necessarily, but through the photographer-subject's perspective.

Regarding meaning, narcissism is the dominant theme in popular and some scholarly discourse around the selfie (Fox & Rooney, 2015; Lee & Sung, 2016; Miltner & Baym, 2015). Several scholars, however, argue that applying narcissism here is too simplistic (Ehlin, 2015; Maddox, 2017; Warfield, 2014). Katie Warfield (2014), for example, develops a critical feminist argument to suggest that the activities surrounding selfies involve the active and therapeutic negotiation of girls' self-images against forces of capitalism, mass media and the patriarchy. Bae-Dimitriadis (2015), Brager

(2017), Ehlin (2015) and Murray (2015) present similar arguments. Less theoretically, Jessica Maddox (2017) points out that the whole point of a selfie is sharing, so narcissism does not accurately describe the phenomenon. For Maddox (2017), it is rather a form of exhibitionism—extravagant behavior to attract attention. As a note, however, these critics may be misinterpreting the contemporary word *narcissism* as used today by attending too closely to the Narcissus myth; psychoanalysts have suggested that a deep-seated sense of inadequacy prompts narcissists to constantly seek attention and confirmation from others (Kohut, 1971; Morf & Rhodewalt, 1993), which is consistent with the serial sharing behavior associated with selfies.

Orthogonal to the question of narcissism, several scholars of the selfie describe the selfie as a site for self-authoring, not only for challenging existing structures but for realizing one's true self through authentic expression (Bae-Dimitriadis, 2015; Brager, 2017; Ehlin, 2015; Murray, 2015; Warfield, 2014). Somewhat less Panglossian, Wendt (2014) finds the selfie to be symptomatic of an endless quest for the ideal self: "As if we are unable to understand our being-in-the-world, we become accustomed to our being-in-the-image" (Wendt, 2014, p. 45).

Lastly, it has been expressed by a number of scholars that the selfie is communicative. Mirzoeff (2015, p. 63), for instance, calls the selfie a form of "predominantly visual conversation." More concretely, Frosh (2015) describes the selfie as a form of *phatic communication*—that is, informal communication whose primary purpose is the production, expression, and maintenance of sociability and wherein the denotative meanings of the words (or, in this case, images) are not important (e.g., small talk and pleasantries such as "hello"). Similarly, Karen Donnachie (2016) discusses that selfies serve as a way for people to greet each other and thereby serve as a path for encountering the other.

4.1.5 Comparing the Selfie and the Self-Portrait

In light of the foregoing analyses, the self-portrait and the selfie can now be compared. Though these phenomena may have seemed quite similar or even coextensive at first

blush, it now appears that they are really quite different. Self-portraits can be in any medium, but selfies can only be photographic—and generally only taken on smartphones. Both forms of representation depict their creators, but the self-portrait seems to emphasize the creator's inner life, whereas the selfie emphasizes the outer life: Self-portraits manifest meditations on, for instance, possibility and death, while selfies limit themselves to the immediate environment. Self-portraits may be kept to oneself, while selfies are virtually always shared. Self-portraits are singular, and selfies are multiple. Selfies are a form of phatic communication; to the extent that self-portraits are communicative, they are substantive. Self-portraits are made to last, but selfies are for now.

When they are considered as documents, it seems that the self-portrait and the selfie manifest differing epistemologies. The selfie seems to correspond to the Otletian (1934) conception of the document as a communicative representation, whereas the self-portrait is typical of the neo-documentalist view of document-as-index. Commensurately, the two seem to reference in different ways according to the framework set forth by Goodman (1976): Self-portraits chiefly express, whereas selfies chiefly denote.

Another difference in particular between the self-portrait and the selfie warrants further discussion: Self-portraits are made over a long period of time and effort, but selfies are nigh-instantaneous. On one hand, this can be seen as part of the ultimate democratization of self-portraiture. Whereas the fine-arts practice of self-portraiture was the purview of an elite few, requiring technical and aesthetic skills as well as leisure and a certain level of wealth, taking selfies is a practice available to a vast number of people (digital divide notwithstanding). But on the other hand, it may be that the aspects of self-portraiture that were worth venerating have disappeared from the democratized selfie.

Given that selfies are easy and quick to make, and that they are made for sharing, it is easy to see how discussions of selfies focus on their networked being rather than on their being as images. And as Rubinstein (2016) wrote, each selfie is self-similar

to every other selfie. But does this not efface the self? If selfies really are *self*ies, then they seem to propound a very particular understanding of the self: as something networked and indistinct. It seems to be as Floridi (2013) writes—that we no longer conceive of ourselves as tokens but rather as (bundles of) types, as "the processes of de-physicalization and typification of individuals as unique and irreplaceable entities start eroding our sense of personal identity as well" (Floridi, 2013, p. 13).

Relatedly, we can revisit the Narcissus myth, this time through the reading of Marshall McLuhan (1964/1994). McLuhan emphasizes that Narcissus' name comes from the Greek word *narcosis*, meaning numbness. On McLuhan's account, Narcissus did not fall in love with his own image because he did not recognize his reflection as his own image; rather, he thought it was someone else. McLuhan interprets this as the alienating capacity of mediation and technology. According to McLuhan, when we use technology, we are always in danger of fragmenting ourselves without knowing it and thereby becoming numb. This worry also recalls Heidegger's (1977) discussion of the danger of modern technology. As discussed in §2.1.1, Heidegger wrote that modern technology compels people to see the world in terms of discrete resources to be exploited and that eventually modern-technologized people come to see each other and themselves in this way.

Therefore, it may be cause for alarm if the selfie is proselytized uncritically as the spiritual successor of the self-portrait. However, we should remember that, as Heidegger (1977) observed, the saving power may lie close to the danger. There are surely cases in which selfies *are* personally meaningful, and perhaps there are cases where they involve effort, drawing out and time (think of the selfie-a-day projects mentioned in the introduction). This possibility is essentially the point of the article "Selfies Are Art" (Berlatsky, 2013), published in *The Atlantic*.

What distinguishes these cases from those wherein selfies are, to quote one of my teenage sisters, "just something everyone does"? This question will have to be pursued in a future study, as this one is occupied with the self-portrait rather than the selfie. Still, it is my hope that the insights into the self-portrait in the subsequent sections

will further guide future research into the selfie.

4.2 RQ2: SELF-PORTRAITURE AS DOCUMENTATION

As discussed in the previous section, the self-portrait is best regarded as a process and from the first-person perspective of the artist (see p. 95). In this section, I develop a general philosophical framework for examining documentation from the first-person perspective, with the immediate aim of describing self-portraiture from the artist's point of view. To develop this framework, I examine and bring together three frameworks for documentation that have previously been proposed in the literature: those of Lund (2004), Gorichanaz (2016) and Gorichanaz and Latham (2016).

This nascent framework is then tested in the empirical stage of my project (RQ3 and RQ4), the findings from which are described in §4.3. The empirical work considers the question of how self-portraiture, framed as a kind of documentation, contributes to understanding—and the nature of that understanding.

4.2.1 Three Previous Models of Documentation

To a small extent, previous literature in document theory has proposed models or frameworks for conceptualizing documentation, as reviewed by Lund (2009). Here I outline and assess three such conceptualizations. The first seems to be the dominant model among scholars, as it is the most cited and represents a consensus view of scholars besides Lund, such as Buckland (2007) and Pédauque (2003) (see §2.1.3.1). The other two I have been involved in developing based on limitations of the dominant model.

4.2.1.1 *Documentation in a Complementarity Perspective*

Lund (2004) developed a theory of the document and documentation inspired by Niels Bohr's complementarity theory in physics. His complementary view of the document has three aspects, as discussed in §2.1.3.1. Regarding documentation, defined as the process of creating a document, Lund (2004) posits that the process unfolds in time and entails:

1. a human producer

2. a set of media instruments for producing

3. a mode of using these instruments

4. the resulting document

For Lund (2004), documentation is constrained and enabled by many factors, from socioeconomic pressures to individual whims. It is also historically situated; to give a germane example, certainly some of the materials used by a 16th-century Italian self-portraitist will differ from those used by a 21st-century American.

This model of documentation has proven useful for the analysis of the creation and circulation of many kinds of documents; Lund (2016), for instance, describes student projects that used it for such analyses. It has also invited critique, such as by Roswitha Skare (2009).

While still accepting the usefulness of this model, I suggest that it falls short of being able to account for self-portraiture. As a third-person account, the model misses out on the experiential quality of the documentation process itself. Moreover, it does not address what leads to the document, such as where the materials and ideas come from. Relatedly, it is disconnected from models of information behavior; as discussed in §2.1.3.2, documentation offers a way to talk about information creation and use, but this model does not draw on that connection.

4.2.1.2 Document Phenomenology

Latham and I have sought to develop a framework for analyzing documents that does not ignore the "mental" aspect of the document, which has not been studied to the extent that the "social" and "physical" aspects have been (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). We developed an analytical framework for the phenomenology of the document, which involves both documental being and becoming (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). The latter is most relevant to the discussion at hand, as it essentially describes documentation.

According to our framework, a document is formed when a person and an object come together, along with the lifeworlds of each. In this merging, the object furnishes intrinsic information (physical properties, e.g., letterforms) and extrinsic information (attributed properties, e.g., reviews); the person furnishes abtrinsic information (properties related to their psycho-physiological state, e.g., hunger) and adtrinsic information (properties related to their past and social life, e.g., memories) (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). These four sorts of information are processed by the person, cohering as documental meaning (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016). They are not meant to suggest hard boundaries or mutually exclusive categories; rather, this is a framework for thinking—a set of buckets that one should try to fill when thinking about a document.

This framework goes some way in showing the experiential aspects of documentation. Just as described with Lund's (2004) model above, this model has been used with success in student work for document analysis, particularly in the analysis of the meaning of museum objects (K. F. Latham, personal communication, May 16, 2017; e.g., Munson, 2017). However, Lund has pointed out that several things are left out from this model, such as the physical processes in documentation (Lund's media and mode). In a word, this model lacks *time* (Lund, Gorichanaz, & Latham, 2016).

4.2.1.3   The Experience of Document Work

In another project, I sought to explore the lived experience of document work. I conducted a phenomenological case study with the head gardener at Shofuso Japanese House and Garden, a historic landscape site in Philadelphia, as she created a document: a comprehensive garden plan (Gorichanaz, 2016). Though document work entails the myriad behaviors and activities related to documents in a given setting (Trace, 2007), this was more precisely a study of documentation (documentation being one subset of document work).

Through analyzing the case of this particular gardener, I developed an experiential framework of documentation that involves a foundation, process and challenges (Gorichanaz, 2016). "An underlying *foundation* supports the *process* of document work,

Table 4.1: Relative strengths and weaknesses of surveyed models on modeling self-portraiture

	Complementarity	Document Phenomenology	Experience of Document Work
Strengths	First model Time element	First-person perspective	First-person perspective Specific to document work
Weaknesses	No first-person perspective Disconnected from information behavior	No time element Not specific to *making* documents Disconnected from information behavior	Disconnected from other models Disconnected from information behavior Unvalidated

and ...this process is marked by certain *challenges*" (p. 5). For the gardener working on this task, the foundational values included authenticity, education and reducing ambiguity; the technical process involved summoning diverse knowledge, channeling the master and stepping back; and the intermittent challenges were organizational and historical in nature (Gorichanaz, 2016).

This framework seems promising for exploring self-portraiture from a first-person perspective, as it honors the experiential aspects of the process while also including the passage of time. However, it was developed inductively and is therefore disconnected from other models of documentation, including those discussed above, as well as models of information behavior. It is also notable that this framework was developed on the basis of a single-case study and has not yet been further validated.

4.2.2   A First-Person Framework of Documentation

The frameworks surveyed above each have strengths and weaknesses relative to their capacity for modeling self-portraiture sufficiently (i.e., as a process, in the first person). These strengths and weaknesses are summarized in Table 4.1. In this section, I synthesize these findings to present a framework of documentation that can serve as an analytical lens for investigating self-portraiture. This will be a first-person, time-sensitive framework that brings together the literature discussed here.

Considered from the first person, a case of documentation is an experience. An

experience is something identified as such and picked out from the flow of existence (Dewey, 1934). Thus the "something" in an experience can be conceptualized as the *level of abstraction* (Floridi, 2011b) at hand, i.e., the set of phenomena of interest to a certain question. As Floridi (2011b) describes, levels of abstraction are teleological; in this case, the purpose is narrative. What qualifies as *an experience* is always up to the experiencer; in the words of Heidegger (1927/2010, p. 53), it is "in each case mine"; in those of James (1890/1950, p. 222), it is "as owned." That said, John Dewey (1934) does offer some guidelines for analyzing experiences from the outside. According to Dewey (1934), experiences have narrative completeness and include several dimensions: continuity between intra- and extra-experience aspects of existence; deepening complexity as time progresses; meaning that persists after the experience concludes; challenges encountered; and anticipation of culmination.

As the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus famously observed, the flow of existence can be likened to a river: "You cannot step into the same river twice, as fresh water is always flowing around you" (frag. 12).[1] Thus, an experience can be likened to a segment of a river. A river includes a riverbed, a flow of water and a number of obstacles (e.g., rocks, branches). This structure echoes the framework of foundation–process–challenges that I previously developed, which is described above (Gorichanaz, 2016); that is, *foundation* corresponds to the riverbed, *process* to the water, and *challenges* to the obstacles. Building on this, the river metaphor serves as the basis for my framework of the experience of documentation, as pictured in Figure 4.1.

Water is the most salient aspect of the river, and so it is a good place so start. Water is analogous to *process* in my previous framework (Gorichanaz, 2016), which includes the technical effectuations that are involved in document work. Implicit in this account is the document itself, which is being created through the process as time goes on. Thus, in the new framework I am developing here, *process* is subsumed

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[1]Innumerable others have echoed this observation. Much more recently, for instance, Wiener (1954, p. 96) described humankind in this way: "We are but whirlpools in a river of ever-flowing water. We are not stuff that abides, but patterns that perpetuate themselves."
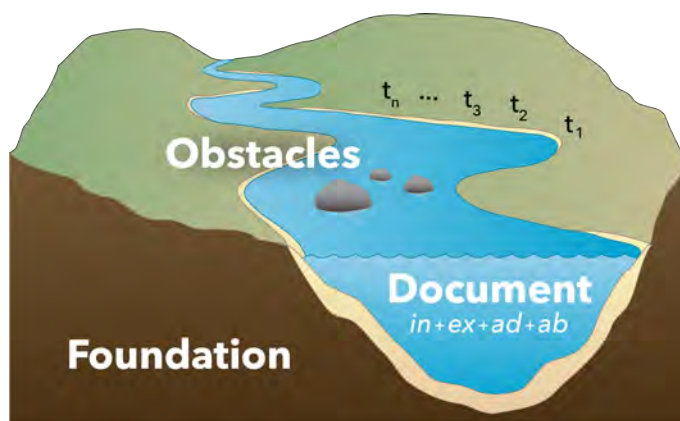
Figure 4.1: A synthesized, first-person model of documentation as a river[2]

under the document itself. "The document" here is to be understood as described in the framework of document phenomenology (Gorichanaz & Latham, 2016), i.e., as a conglomeration of intrinsic, extrinsic, abtrinsic and adtrinsic information (in short: person+object). A caveat, however: the borders of the document while it is being made extend beyond what may be considered the document when it is finished; that is, the tools, medium and mode are also part of the document-in-progress. That assertion is supported by research in philosophy and psychology which finds the distinction between subject and object to dissolve in the experience of art-making (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975/2000; Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2012).

Following Heraclitus, we can imagine time to be represented by the movement from point to point along the path of the river. A case of documentation, then, is analogous to a certain number of points along the river. Of course, the river continues beyond the endpoints in both directions: the materials that gave rise to a document existed before the document was made, and they will still exist (in some form) after the document decays (pursuant to the first law of thermodynamics, i.e., that energy can neither be created nor destroyed). Thus a case of documentation can be analyzed

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[2]This figure is based on a design by Tracey Saxby for Integration and Application Network (IAN) image library (*http://ian.umces.edu/imagelibrary*).

at a number of times t appropriate to the case: t_1, t_2, t_2, ..., t_n. Depending on the starting point that is chosen, a case of documentation could be conceptualized to include information seeking and other parts of information behavior.

The riverbed (foundations) and obstacles (challenges) can be adopted without modification from my 2016 framework. The riverbed corresponds to the path of the river—the guiding values, purpose and narrative structure of a case of documentation. The obstacles correspond to things that come up in the process that are experienced as *objectively present* (*vorhanden*, Heidegger, 1927/2010, also translated as *present-at-hand*), i.e., as moments of breakdown rather than part of the flow of experience. The river, as the document, flows around these obstacles.

This framework of the experience of documentation seems to address the shortcomings of the previously-developed frameworks described above while bringing together their strengths (again, relative to the purpose at hand). It offers a way to think about the development of a document over time (including the person, object, tools, setting, etc., as relevant to the given experience) in a way that honors the first-person experience thereof and tries to bring together previous literature. Further on in this study, the framework presented here will guide analyses into specific examples of documentation (as self-portraiture), which will serve as an illustration and testbed for its application.

4.3   RQ3: THE EXPERIENCE OF SELF-PORTRAITURE

To get a sense of the lived experience of self-portraiture, I engaged artists to create self-portraits and document their experiences, and I analyzed the resulting material as described in the methods chapter. This work has resulted in a narrative description and a poetic display of each participant's experience, presented in Appendix A. The narratives themselves express the nature of self-portraiture, and thus they are considered the main fruits of this inquiry.

Still, to help us better understand the meaning of self-portraiture, we can consider the themes that can be found within and across these accounts, and how these relate

Table 4.2: Summary of themes discerned in the artists' experiences. Letters in parentheses refer to Foundation, Document and Obstacles, which were presented in the previous section. In the case of D, the italicized letters refer to intrinsic, extrinsic, abtrinsic and adtrinsic information.

All	**Most**	**Few**
Communicating (F)	The hump (D *ab*/*in*)	Deep knowledge (D *ab*)
Memories (D *ad*)	Mistakes (O)	Finished? (D *in*)
References (D *ex*/*ad*)	Non-decisions (D *in*/*ab*)	Money (O/D *ad*)
Self-efficacy (D *ab*)	Other people (D *ex*)	Things just for me (D *in*)
Taking breaks (D *ab*)	Other works (D *ex*)	Thinking by sketching (D *in*)
Stepping back (D *ab*)	Ti esti (F)	Thinking at work (D *ex*)
Tension/relaxation (D *ab*)		

to the framework of documentation presented in the previous section. Thus, in this section, I present the results of a thematic analysis of the experiences. First, we will consider those themes shared among all the experiences, then those shared among most, and finally some themes that emerged only in two or three accounts but nonetheless are particularly intriguing. These themes are summarized in Table 4.2 and are described in the following paragraphs. Note that the table also includes mappings to the framework developed in the previous section; this is discussed after the themes, in §4.3.5.

4.3.1 Themes Found in All the Experiences

4.3.1.1 Communication

All seven partipants demonstrated a communicative intent, suggesting that communication is a Foundation of self-portraiture. For some, this surfaced as consciously trying to say something through their art. Brian, for example, described adding "referential marks to show more complete thoughts," some of which were "almost like written language but not quite, like those fuzzy memories that you can't quite make out." Beyond linguistic metaphors, Brianna described letting her body language express a felt meaning, and Jeannie sought to express the interplay between inside and outside in her sense of self through painting on the frame and depicting her brain and thoughts. Communicating in another sense, some of the participants sought to show their skill at their craft. Emily, for example, switched from photography to painting

for her project in part because "I want my skills to come through, and my skills are in painting and not necessarily something new." Also, Justin mentioned that he wanted his stained glass piece to seem difficult even to other highly skilled glass artists. Finally, most of the artists posted photographs of their self-portraits on Instagram (often while in progress), making manifest this communicative intent. As part of communication, the artists described thinking about how viewers will see and interpret the piece, and the choices they made were strategic to this end.

4.3.1.2   Memories

Two other themes common to all the artists in my study were memories and reference materials. These are related in that they both constitute adtrinsic information in the experience of self-portraiture, and indeed sometimes they overlapped. Brian, for instance, explicitly considered his memories to be "internal references." Memories arose in two ways: during conscious self-reflection, in which memories were sought and conjured, often in a distinct stage of work; and spontaneously, intermingled in other stages.

4.3.1.3   Reference Materials

In terms of external reference materials, most of the artists used photographs, some used sketches, some used the work of other artists, and some used the work itself as a reference. To give some examples of the last of these, Emily produced an all-blue photo by accident and then used that color blue as the background in her painting (see Figure 4.2), and Tammy took photos of her drawing at each stopping point, and she often referred to these photos as evidence of previous states of the work to remind herself of how things were before she fixed them (or, sometimes, accidentally made them worse). Reference materials were used in two ways: first, directly, in that the artist attempted to duplicate some aspects of the reference; and second, indirectly, in that the artist immersed themselves in the reference to get a general sense impression and then freely worked on the sketches. For an example of the latter, Jeannie referred to a book for inspiration for her farm machinery, "just to have a general feeling" of a

(a) Accidental photo   (b) Painting in progress

Figure 4.2: The background color of Emily's painting was directly inspired by an accidental photo.

"mechanistic impression." The artists only used their reference materials up to a point; sketches guided the process in the beginning, and other references were used through the middle stages, but by the final stages all reference materials had been abandoned in all cases. As Brianna said, "I don't worry about matching the photograph anymore—I just want to do what will look good in the painting." At this point, the work itself becomes the artist's key reference.

4.3.1.4 Self-Efficacy

Another important theme in these experiences was self-efficacy. Some of the artists sought to ensure self-efficacy by choosing a project they knew they could do well, while others gained self-efficacy by succeeding at a dubious challenge. An exemplar of the former was Britt, who used her tried-and-true methods to paint comfortably, and an exemplar of the latter was Tammy, who did not do her self-portrait in her usual style, but all the same she finished the project proud of her success in drawing a face and eager to do another. Most of the artists fell somewhere between these extremes. For example, Brianna found some aspects of her painting to be very challenging, such as rendering her studded belt. All the same, on a day when she was having a difficult time at school and work, was relieved to come back to her self-portrait in the evening

"because this is something I can do." All of the artists described feeling proud and accomplished after finishing their pieces.

4.3.1.5   Taking Breaks and Stepping Back

Much like research papers and dissertations, the self-portraits in this study were not made in one, nose-to-the-grindstone session. On the contrary, all of the artists described taking breaks, from minutes to weeks, and while they were working, stepping back. Both of these seem to be methods of gaining a refreshed perspective on the piece. As Emily described, "When I take breaks and then come back, I have completely fresh eyes on the painting. When I work for long periods of time, I end up making more mistakes and redoing a lot of that work." Regarding stepping back, most of the artists physically did this. Tammy, in addition to physically stepping back, took photos of her drawing with her smartphone and then inspected the image on her phone, which helped her see things that needed to be fixed that were not apparent by just looking at the drawing.

4.3.1.6   Tension and Relaxation

The final theme observed in all the participants' experiences included the opposing feelings of tension and relaxation. For these artists, working on art is, by and large, a relaxing activity. This was often described in contrast to the hectic nature of the rest of life. Even so, certain tensions came up in the process. Sometimes, interestingly, these were only noticed when there was a pause in the process. For example, Brianna and Emily described only noticing their lower back pain when they took a break. In other cases, tension was experienced in a more visceral way, perhaps as a reaction to some difficult point in their work. Justin, for example, described the tension he felt while his glass paintings were firing—a high-risk time in the process.

4.3.2 Themes Found in Most of the Experiences

4.3.2.1 The Hump

A key point in the dissolution of tension was getting over "the hump" of the process. All the artists except Brianna and Tammy described working faster as the piece neared completion. Most of them described the turning point through the metaphor of climbing a hill. In Emily's words, the "hump" is "a period of frustration before I can coast, when I don't like how it looks." Jeannie refers to it as a "plateau," a brief landing during a climb that affords clarity on the journey. As she describes in one of her self-interviews:

> I've kind of reached this little plateau. But it was hard to push myself up to this point. But what's good about the plateau is you have a bit of a view of how things are, and then you could even see the top. Now my vision of what the whole piece will look like is much clearer.

4.3.2.2 Non-Decisions

The artist's experiences show many decisions being consciously made in the creation of their works. However, sometimes what an onlooker might want to call "a decision" was in fact not consciously decided by the artist. I call these non-decisions, because there was no deliberation and no choice was made; rather, the result sprang seemingly from nowhere. Perhaps a decision was made subconsciously, but in the artist's experience it did not register as a choice. For example, Jeannie knew from the start that her self-portrait would be square. She did not first consider a number of aspect ratios and then make the decision to do a square self-portrait; rather, squareness was always a part of her vision of this self-portrait. To give another example, Tammy never consciously decided to create a head portrait (i.e., a portrait where only the person's head is shown). In our follow-up interview, when I mentioned that another artist (Brianna) had done a whole-length portrait, Tammy remarked that she had never even considered *not* doing a head. Non-decisions were found in all but Brian's, Emily's and Justin's narratives. What is a non-decision for one artist may be a decision for another artist. While Jeannie's self-portrait was going to be a square from the start, Justin

spent months ideating his portrait's format. And whereas Tammy "non-decided" to do a head, Emily wrestled over what about herself she would depict, and how.

4.3.2.3 Other People and Works

Most of the participants, at one point or another, involved other people in their process of self-portraiture. Only Brian and Tammy seemed to really do their pieces alone. Justin, for instance, mentioned soliciting feedback as he was trying to capture his likeness in his painting: "I ask my son and my wife, and they say, 'No, that's not the right one.' ... Anyone who comes to visit my studio, I ask for feedback." Jeannie found inspiration for elements of her piece from her sister and a discussion group. Emily went so far as to include photographs of other people in her self-portrait. In addition to other people, most of the experiences in this study also involved other works. Brian, for example, worked on other pieces in breaks while his self-portrait was drying. Jeannie, similarly, works on several pieces at once and described how the colors she mixes for one painting sometimes end up being the colors she uses for other paintings. Tammy used other works as a way to ideate her self-portrait; she began by doing what she called "flow pieces," where she freely and meditatively pushed around and applied paint, somewhat akin to the way an athlete does warmups prior to competition.

4.3.2.4 Mistakes

Above we have seen examples of themes that fall under Foundations and Document in my model of documentation. An example of Obstacles is the theme of mistakes. All the artists in my study except Brian described mistakes they made. Often these mistakes were sources of tension, another theme. Britt, for example, moved her projector between sessions and had a hard time lining it back up. Britt, Emily and Tammy met difficulties in rendering the proportions: first one feature is too big, and then another. Jeannie, ever conscious of the dangers of applying too much paint, finds herself doing just that. For most of a piece's development, the artist fixes these mistakes. However, what I found interesting is that eventually, mistakes are embraced. Either it's too late
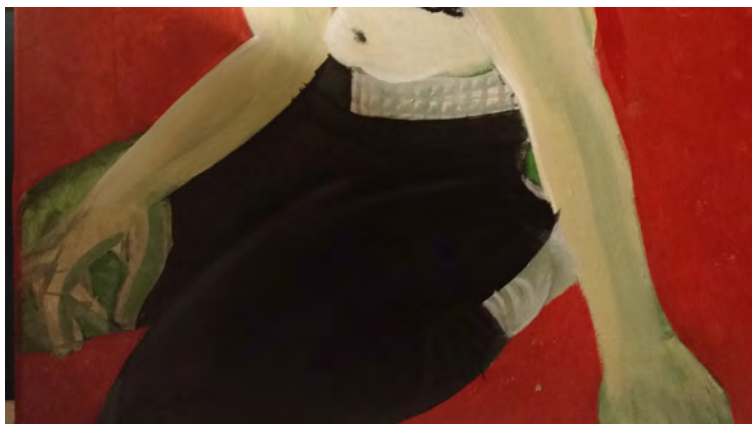
Figure 4.3: Brianna's portrait after her second session. She is reworking the hands, which will end up "too big."

or too much trouble to fix them, or they produce an interesting effect. As Brianna said, "And when I think I'm done, I realize [the hands] are way too big. It bothers me, but at the same time I like the distortion," and afterwards she does not change them (see Figure 4.3). Emily was inspired by the embraced accidents of masters such as Cézanne, and she found herself doing the same in her work. As she said, "Those accidents are the fun part, after all. It's completely unintentional, but it's intentional that I leave it."

4.3.2.5   Ti Esti

In philosophy, the *ti esti* question is that of what it is to be something. Four of the participants posed such questions while doing their self-portraits, generally at the beginning. Some considered what a self-portrait is. Brian, for instance, said that he considered all his work to be self-portraits, and he deliberated on what would make this piece different. All four of these artists raised the question of the self. To quote Jeannie: "I am so much—I don't even know what's down deep." The answers to these questions guided the process, and therefore the ti esti theme belongs to the Foundation of this form of documentation. Put differently, the artists considered not only what

Figure 4.4: Jeannie's self-portrait after her first session. She began with the frame.

they were as selves, but how to depict themselves as selves. In our follow-up interview, Brian described this as collapsing his life into a single image:

> All the things I try to collapse into this one thing are probably all the things I find too difficult to the take time to explain to somebody...A painting, to me, is all that collapsed nature, because I probably will never sit with the viewer, and it would be so narcissistic for me to be like, "Let me start at the beginning, and I'll roll you through the last 27 years of my life."

Jeannie's example offers further detail. "So much of my existence is on the border," she said at the beginning of her process. "I can't even identify myself without thinking about the interface between inside and outside." Consequently, she played with this interface in her composition and content (see Figure 4.4)

This brings up another mode of self-representation: Several of the artists described not only wanting their image to resemble them, but wanting the artifact to look like it was made by them, i.e. manifesting their style. Justin was particularly vocal on this point. "I wanted a certain look to it," he said. "I wanted it to be kaleidoscopic,

Figure 4.5: "Just for me" magical symbols in Justin's self-portrait

colorful, psychedelic—and those characteristics I like to keep in all my art." Along with memories and self-efficacy, two themes described above, the self was a continual topic of reflection for those participants who engaged in the ti esti question. In some cases, doing the self-portrait seemed to influence the self-concept. Justin, for example, said, "Both the trip [to Colorado] and this project have already been pivotal in the way I see myself." Thus not only can the self-portrait reflect the self, but it can also help constitute it.

4.3.3 Themes Found in a Few of the Experiences

In addition to those themes found in all or most of the artists' experiences, it is worth spending a few moments on themes that arose in only two or three of the artists' experiences but are nonetheless intriguing. Some may be good candidates for further research.

Deep knowledge Brianna and Emily described moments where they tapped into deep knowledge of human anatomy in order to render something how it should be without referring to or in spite of their photographic reference.

Just for me Though all the artists demonstrated that their work was communicative,

Brian and Justin mentioned putting secret elements in their self-portraits that were just for them (see Figure 4.5).

Money Brianna and Emily mentioned money as a constraining factor in their work. For Brianna, this meant dealing with subpar brushes in exchange for good paint. For Emily, this meant abandoning film and going to painting.

Thinking through sketching Brianna, Jeannie and Justin used sketching as a means of working out aspects of their self-portrait, such as composition.

Thinking while at work Even while they were not physically and consciously doing their self-portraits, Britt and Emily found themselves thinking about their self-portraits while at work. Similarly, Tammy mentioned thinking about hers while at the store.

Unsure if it's done Some of the artists seemed to know when their piece was finished. Brianna and Jeannie, however, said that they thought it was done but it might not be, and that they may do a bit more work.

4.3.4 Reflections on the Uniqueness of Each Case

Phenomenology of practice seeks to explicate the essence and meaning of individual, unique cases (van Manen, 2014). Surely some comments are warranted about the shared aspects; as van Manen (2014, p. 68) contends, "A powerful phenomenological text thrives on a certain irrevocable tension between what is unique and what is shared." Above I offered a theme-based account of what was shared across the examples of self-portraiture. In the spirit of returning to the unique, here I briefly consider what themes uniquely arose in each individual example.

Brian As an abstract expressionist work, Brian's example particularly explored the ti esti question. He used cognitive, linguistic and narrative metaphors to explore the representational and communicative aspects of his self-portrait.

Brianna Time and again Brianna mentioned seeing as the purview of the artist. She said this was important because sometimes things don't really look how one

might suppose they should. For example, given the lighting in Brianna's picture, "It's funny how…dark green makes blonde hair." This seeing had epistemological consequences: "Sometimes you don't even realize what you look like until you paint yourself."

Britt Britt's approach to her self-portrait was as an after-work hobby keyed to self-efficacy. As such, she made sure it was easy and fun to do, rather than challenging. This aim led to her development of a new art-making technique: projecting a digital image on her canvas and painting directly on the projection.

Emily "That's what life's all about: connectedness," Emily said, and concomitantly both her self-concept and self-portrait include other people. She was the only artist in my study to depict other people in her self-portrait. Additionally, Emily's experience time and again framed her practice in contrast with modern technology. "So many of the photographs we take [today] are manipulated with computers," she mused while using a vintage Polaroid camera that specifically disallowed such manipulation. Later, when she was painting, she said, "There's also something about spending so much time bringing a picture together, especially nowadays when you can take a picture in an instant on your phone."

Jeannie While some of the artists developed a clear vision of their project at the beginning, Jeannie's process began only with a square frame and developed organically. Over the course of the summer, she followed her thoughts, exploring ideas and memories about farming, balance and the inside/outside dichotomy. This is not to say she did no planning, but rather that her planning was done, in her words, "incrementally."

Justin As an accomplished stained glass artist, part of Justin's intention with his piece was to showcase his skill. As he said in our follow-up interview, "I wanted to have something that, even if you're experienced making stained glass, I wanted it to be difficult for that person. I have almost 18 years experience building these

windows, so my experience and my skill level I think is above the norm, so I can build pretty intricate, difficult pieces."

Tammy Most of Tammy's art is mixed-media, colorful and abstract. Her self-portrait, in contrast, is a realistic pencil drawing. Whereas the other artists in my study sought to do a self-portrait that demonstrated their style, Tammy saw the project as an opportunity to challenge herself to draw a face—something she has long struggled with. Perhaps because of this, she experienced great accomplishment when she finished: "I'm not good at faces. So it felt good to be able to draw my own," she said in the follow-up interview.

4.3.5 Relating the Themes to the Framework Developed in RQ2

In §4.2 I developed a framework for analyzing experiences of documentation, including self-portraiture. I did not directly employ this framework in writing the narratives (Appendix A) or identifying the themes discussed above, though it surely contributed to my hermeneutic lens as I was working.

To test the framework, I considered whether the themes I identified in this study could map onto the various concepts in the framework. These mappings are shown in Table 4.2. To begin with Foundations, I determined that the themes of communicating (anticipating the audience) and ti esti (questioning self and genre) were relevant. As for Document, I put the majority of the themes in this category; within Document, most of the themes related to abtrinsic information—that is, feelings and other psycho-physiological states—including self-efficacy, taking breaks, stepping back, and tension and relaxation. This seems reasonable, given that the focus here was on the individual's lived experience, and much of the empirical material was introspective. To be sure, though, among the themes found in all or most of the experiences, there were examples of intrinsic, extrinsic, abtrinsic and adtrinsic information. Finally, for Obstacles, the theme of mistakes was found in most of the experiences, and the theme of money was found in a few. It is notable that mistakes were not always perceived to be negative (as discussed above), as the word *obstacle* seems to imply, but rather

something to be embraced.

All in all, there were no themes that could not be mapped onto the framework, and no concepts in the framework were unmapped. This seems to lend at least provisional support to its validity and usefulness, though of course this question can be taken up with more systematicity and detail in future research.

One area in particular that may warrant further research is how a person's sense of speed and ease change over the course of a case of documentation. As described in §4.3.2.1, most of my participants experienced a "hump" in their process, before which work was slow, deliberate and sometimes difficult, and after which work was fast and generally easy. In the general framework developed for RQ2, this change is not conveyed (i.e., the river's width, gradient, turbulence, etc., are unspecified). It may or may not be the case that it should be.

4.4 RQ4: UNDERSTANDING IN SELF-PORTRAITURE

The previous research question explored the lived experience of self-portraiture. As we have seen, it includes several informational and epistemic aspects, such as communicative intent, the use of reference materials and the ti esti question. Following from that analysis, I sought to explore specifically the question of building understanding in self-portraiture.

Many examples of the development of ontic understanding can be found in my participants' experiences. They can be organized into two groups: self-understanding, and understanding of the artistic process. Here I give examples of these forms of understanding (summarized in Table 4.3). I also mention some of the pieces of information that came up in the empirical material that seem to have contributed to each instance of understanding.

4.4.1 Self-Understanding

One way self-understanding was built was in terms of comparing the past self to the present self. Brian, Justin and Tammy all built this form of self-understanding. For

Table 4.3: Understandings developed through self-portraiture

Self-Understanding	Artistic Process
Comparing past self to present self	Developing a new method
Experiencing a watershed moment	Noticing environmental influence
Coming to terms with mental conflicts	Learning not to force it
Differences between self and others	

Brian, it came about chiefly through the processing of memories. As Brian worked, he reflected on living in the city versus the country, and conversations that have stuck with him since his childhood. Brian processed these memories by giving them external embodiment as marks on his canvas, and this allowed him to visually link certain memories together, cover up and re-reveal them, etc. (see Figure 4.6).

Justin's case also involved the processing of memories, but a watershed in his experience was his hiking trip to Colorado partway through the project. The trip was a major test of his physical endurance, and he experienced, as he described in our follow-up interview, "this crazy self-esteem and self-confidence. It's still kinda twinkling." This sense of self-efficacy went beyond physical fitness; Justin said he found himself more confident in his abilities as an artist, a husband and a father. Other information leading up to this understanding include: his enlisting his wife and son to critique his drawing; his thinking about his 18 years of experience doing stained glass; and his current interest in symbology. Similarly, Tammy also experienced self-understanding as renewed self-efficacy. For her, this was an artifact of successfully drawing a face, which has long been challenging for her. Information involved in her case of self-understanding include her memory of doing a draw-one-face-a-day challenge several years prior, her browsing face drawings on Instagram for inspiration, her failed attempts at drawing faces early in her process, and the drawing itself. Central to both Justin's and Tammy's cases of understanding was willingly taking on a difficult challenge.

Another form of self-understanding was coming to terms with mental conflicts. This is not as stark a change as sensing oneself to be different now than in the past,
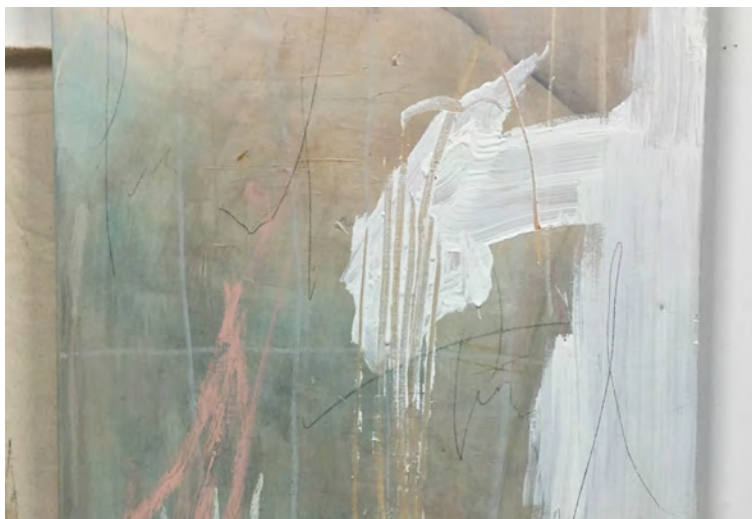
Figure 4.6: Brian covered part of his past in white paint and then scratched through it, re-revealing the past.

but it is a felt difference in self-understanding all the same. In Jeannie's case, she had been conflicted about helping her sister on the farm. As Jeannie describes in one of her session interviews:

> It makes me feel like I'm dealing with the whole issue of wanting the farm, not wanting to go help my sister on the farm, wanting to go help my sister on the farm. Somehow, when I'm working on this project, that sort of settles. It's kind of like stirring a boiling pot. If you don't stir it, the bubbles will pop out and go on the stove, but if you stir, you keep it more calm...It is a therapeutic project.

Indeed, Jeannie explicitly set out to achieve this sort of understanding through the project, as she told me in our follow-up interview. The information involved in Jeannie's understanding includes the physical practice of drawing, arranging and painting the various farm elements as she considered the memories of her grandfather's farm, the memories of her parents' differing views of farming, and her estimations of the role of farming in American history and politics. Central to this case of understanding was spending a lot of time on the project.

Finally, Brianna came to understand that she sees herself differently than other

people see themselves. In her self-portrait, she depicted herself with bare midriff. In our follow-up interview, she mentioned that other people said, upon seeing the portrait, that they wouldn't have been comfortable enough to portray themselves in that way. Describing her portrait, Brianna said:

> It definitely shows how comfortable I've become with myself. I don't think I'd ever before think it was okay to show so much skin and being comfortable with whatever. . . It's definitely something I was comfortable doing. . . It shows comfort and a willingness to do this style that I want to do and use colors that I want to use. I think it also shows what I want to do as a whole. I love painting like this. . . This embodies my style, like what I want to see myself as. Just embracing everything, being able to add all my clothes, and my tattoos. I got—I was like, "Wow, I have tattoos now. This is crazy." It's always been—I've wanted to look like this forever. And I finally achieved—I feel comfortable with how I look, and I guess that's a good mark of success.

Indeed. In one of her first session interviews, Brianna mentioned feeling insecure because she was working at a tattoo parlor but did not, at that time, have any tattoos. The information involved in this understanding included the goal she had for her self-appearance, memories of how she used to look and discussions with others. Central to this understanding was talking about her artwork with others.

4.4.2 Artistic Process

A second form of understanding built in the examples of self-portraiture in this study was about the artist's work process. Each artist had a typical process that they developed over the course of their career, and all but Tammy followed that typical process in this project. These processes are not set in stone; rather, they evolve each time the artist goes to work. Like Kierkegaard's (1849/1989, p. 43) conception of the self (see §2.2.3), the artistic process is defined in its doing. To be sure, the process of even the most accomplished artists is subject to revision. In my project, three of the participants built new understandings regarding their processes.

In her project, Britt developed a method of painting on a projection. In recent years, she began using a projector to help her render the underdrawing more quickly (see Figure 4.7). She set out to do that in this project, and while she was drawing
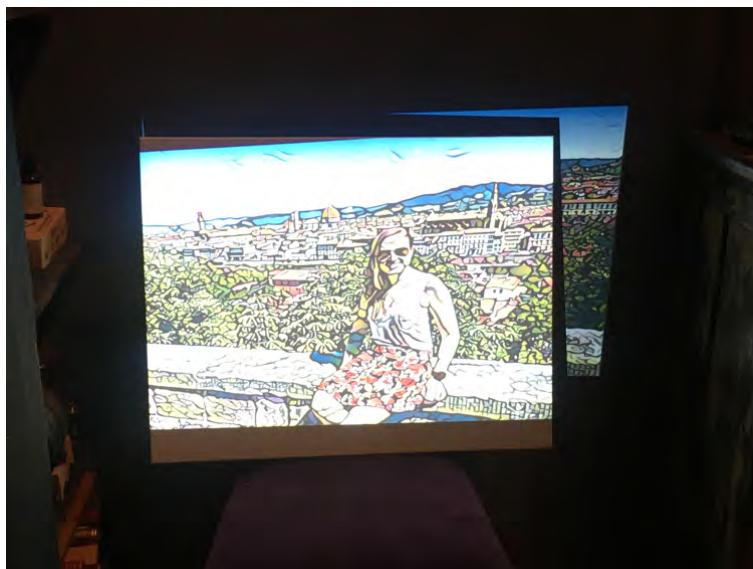
Figure 4.7: Britt's projected photograph

the lines she was struck by the colors of the image and got the idea to paint directly over the projection. She did so, and it worked out so well that she used the same technique on her next painting. The information involved in this case of understanding included the method of using the projector for the linework and seeing the colors of the projection. Central to this case of understanding was being open to new ways to do something, even while doing it.

Emily, who works at the Barnes Foundation, came to understand the impact that her viewing habits have on her work. In our follow-up interview, she said that her painting reminded her of something by Matisse, and she suspected it had to do with her job at the Barnes Foundation, where she sees works by Matisse every day. She recalled a painting she did years ago that resembled Degas' works, at a time when "I was looking at a lot of Degas and I really was interested in what he was doing." Commenting on this, she said, "We're creative, but artists are always piecing things together from other people's ideas, because that's how we learn." The information in this case of understanding included Emily's memories of works from Degas and

Figure 4.8: One of Tammy's "flow pieces," an inadvertent face

that prior painting, works by Matisse, and her painting in progress. Central to this understanding was seeing those aspects of the environment that can easily be taken for granted.

Finally, Tammy came to understand that some things in art cannot be forced but must happen naturally. To begin her process, Tammy engaged in several flow pieces, where she freely puts colors down and paints shapes without any planning or intention. One of these pieces seemed to resemble a face (see Figure 4.8), and she hatched the idea to do her own self-portrait in that style. Try as she might, however, consciously attempting to do so did not work. For this reason she abandoned her typical style and sought to render a realistic self-portrait in pencil. As described above, that effort ended up being successful in its own way. The information in this case of understanding included the accidental face painting and the attempts at recreating it. Central to this understanding was the willingness to abandon something that is not working and the openness to try a new challenge.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

> Before the problem of the creative artist,
> analysis must, alas, lay down its arms.
>
> _____
>
> "Dostoevsky and Parricide"
> Sigmund Freud, 1928

In this study, I have conceptualized the self-portrait as a document, developed a first-person framework of documentation, described the nature of the experience of self-portraiture both narratively and thematically, and finally discerned two sorts of understanding that are built in self-portraiture and how information contributes to them. In this chapter, I discuss how these findings relate to the literature that I reviewed in Chapter 2 and the doors they open for future research, and then I reflect on my research methods, process and approach. In this chapter, if I haven't already done so, I hope to demonstrate, *pace* Freud, that creative work is not entirely inscrutable.

5.1 RETURNING TO THE LITERATURE

To ground this study, I surveyed the relevant literature on information behavior, document theory, understanding, the experience of information and documents, and selfhood. Here I will discuss how my findings validate, extend and challenge that literature.

5.1.1 Information Behavior

The findings from my study have ramifications for the research on the information behavior of artists, but also information behavior theory in general.

5.1.1.1 Artists' Information Behavior

As we saw in §2.1.2, most of the information behavior research on artists has dealt only with information seeking. As Case and Given (2016) show, this is the case with information behavior research in general. To be sure, the information professions have long been interested in ensuring access to information, and information seeking

is closely tied to access; however, information providers should also take into account what is to be done with the information that is sought, for when people judge relevance they do so with respect to a task at hand (Hjørland, 2010). Thus, information behavior scholars should account for other aspects of the information–communication chain.

In the domain of art, information behavior studies by Cowan (2004) and Tidline (2003) have done this, exploring the whole process of art-making in one particular project. The findings from those studies and mine are consistent. First, the artists in my study did not look at information seeking as a problem to be overcome or a gap to be leapt; it was, rather, a process of discovery, an exciting challenge—a search for inspiration rather than a solution. By now numerous researchers have pointed out that information behavior extends well beyond problematic situations (Kari & Hartel, 2007; Talja & Nyce, 2015), and my study further secures art as a domain in which this is the case.

My findings also add further color to the field's knowledge of the information behavior of artists at work, regarding, for instance, when reference materials are sought and used, and when they are abandoned. To this end, my study sheds light on the multifarious nature of information needs among artists; some people at some times seek representative references that will more or less be duplicated, some seek general impressions, and some seek broadly-defined ideas. Moreover, my study fleshes out what Cowan (2004) briefly mentioned: that artists seek to create understanding through their work. In the artists in this study, this understanding was both introspective and communicative; that is, they sought to create not only understanding within themselves but also within viewers. Notably, all the artists in my study experienced some measure of tension or struggle in their building of understanding; this was not a defect or something to be done away with, but rather it was part of the process, and perhaps a vital one at that.

How can those who serve artists informationally, such as art librarians, put these findings to use? My study has shown how many different sorts of information bear on the understandings built in art-making, beyond those traditionally managed by

information professionals. These include memories, feelings and impressions. That is not to say that the artistic process is totally inscrutable. Rather, to me, this finding offers some grounding and guidance for offering information literacy education to artists. My study showed how an artist's documenting their own process can help in this regard. For instance, Jeannie mentioned this project helped her think more consciously about the reference material she was using, which improved her process. Brian likewise felt that his work was honed because the self-interviews helped him see what he was doing.

We can also consider how these findings shed light on the work of non-artists. Becker (1982) suggested that art is just the kind of work that some people do. So what if we looked to the work of artists to draw lessons for others? Sociologist James March (1970) did just this, calling social scientists to infuse their work with artistry by paying attention to aesthetic excitement, creative imagination and unanticipated discovery. More recently, Rachel Ivy Clarke (2018) has argued that librarianship is a field of design (rather than social science), explicitly foregrounding the creative problem-solving involved in librarians' work. Following her argument, there is certainly something to be learned from the work of artists for library practice. Andrea Kohashi (2018) would agree; she recently gave a talk on the teleological similarities between book artists and librarians: both create points of entry, provide tools for understanding and inspire further inquiry.

5.1.1.2 Extending Information Behavior Theory

The implications of my study also extend outside the domain of art, to information behavior theory in general. In particular, they demonstrate the sheer diversity of information sources involved in certain projects, and, moreover, that information-based projects never stand alone.

5.1.1.2.1 Diverse Information Sources

The diversity of information that bears on self-portraiture goes far beyond what the field has traditionally considered informational, even in "everyday" research (Ocepek, 2018). In this study, we have seen

how memories, bodily movements, the developing artwork itself—and more—can be informative parts of self-portraiture. Moreover, this study has shown how information activities always involve information encountering, at least in the form of memories and associations, and all this information contributes to the resulting understanding. Of course, information encountering has been identified previously, by Erdelez (1995), as a facet of information behavior, but my study shows the real pervasiveness of information encountering.

5.1.1.2.2 Complicating Tasks and Projects   Information behavior theory tends to conceptualize tasks as if they occur in isolation. To some extent, this is a necessary abstraction: People play many different roles in life, and it is expectable that these roles overlap temporally, but in general one might assume that these overlapping tasks have nothing to do with each other. In my study, however, we have seen, for example, Jeannie working on several paintings at once, and the color she mixed for one painting then came to be used on the others, as well as Brian working on other paintings while waiting for stages of his self-portrait to dry, which then helped him see what needed to be done next on his self-portrait. In general, for all the artists, taking a break from their artwork and doing something else was an important part of making the artwork. This all complicates the simple idea I had at the outset of my project (which perhaps many of us have) that an individual artist would make a single artwork at a time in a straightforward manner. On the contrary, what I have found indicates that seemingly separate information tasks may influence each other. How can this be theorized? Addressing that question is outside the scope of my present study, but it should be picked up in other research.

5.1.1.2.3 Theorizing Creation and Outcomes   To date, research in document theory and that in information behavior have been separate. To cite a recent example, Lundh and Dolatkhah (2016) argue that reading should be considered a form of document work *rather than* information behavior. Their reasoning for this is, essentially, that the field of information behavior is entrenched in the cognitivist paradigm.

In my view, however, this may be unnecessarily divisive: why must it be a question of either/or? Positing this dichotomy, it seems to me, denies the possibility for findings in information behavior to be applied in document theory, and vice versa. This is a shame, not least because the field of information behavior is evolving paradigmatically to incorporate perspectives outside cognitivism—despite having the name it does, which some would see changed (see Wilson, 2009). It seems reasonable to me that research in both document theory and information behavior can and should build on useful findings from the "other" field.

As I remarked §2.1.3.2, theorization in information creation has been limited by a cognitivist view of information, but this limitation could be surmounted by recognizing the material and social aspects of documentation as part of information creation. Moreover, the theoretical work already done in document theory could be brought to bear on the theoretical struggle to account for information creation and use. That is, information behavior theory and document theory can be integrated at the site of information creation and use or outcomes. I believe my research in this study has benefited by situating itself in both document theory and information behavior, continuing to pave the way for future research taking this approach.

Additionally, some recent work has sought to expand what is meant by *cognitivism*, incorporating social, bodily and affective dimensions (Keilty & Leazer, 2018; Weissenberger, Budd, & Herold, 2018). This is consonant with the picture of human cognition being uncovered in biology (Damasio, 2018). If such efforts continue, we will have a more true-to-life and less divisive field.

5.1.2 Document Theory

My study has explored how self-portraits can function as documents. This has sometimes been implicated (e.g., Crowe, 2014; De Santis, 2015; Petrikovic, 2016), but how this is the case has not yet been explored deeply. Responding to my first research question (§4.1), I have looked at how reference, meaning and evidence manifest in the self-portrait, and comparing these features of the selfie served to sharpen these

findings. This study contributes to document theory particularly in considering the questions of representation and temporality.

5.1.2.1 Representation and Description

A key issue of interest in self-portraiture is that of representation. As we saw, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word *self-portrait* as a "portrait of oneself" (Self-portrait, 2016). In an Otletian theory of representation, this "of oneself" is a matter of visual similarity between the person and the object. This would seem to be the predominant interpretation: In general, people expect artworks to look like the things depicted, and a self-portrait thus is expected to look like the artist. In other words, this is artwork as mimesis, a Platonic or Aristotelian theory of art (Cauquelin, 2012).

But this is not the only way in which "of oneself" can be understood. In this study, we have seen how the self can be represented in terms of style rather than, or in addition to, content. This particularly came through in Justin's account; he talked about wanting himself to come through in the style of his piece and not just in the depiction of his face. Incidentally, his piece also includes a realistic head portrait as its centerpiece, but the piece itself shares a family resemblance with his other work that is recognizably *him.* Thus "of oneself" can be understood not only as depiction but also in the sense that a self-portrait comes from oneself. Indeed, as I discussed in §4.1.3.3, the etymology of *self-portrait* testifies to this fact. In this sense, *representation* is understood in Briet's (1951/2006) terms, as indexical reference (pointing by association), rather than Otlet's (1934) sense of representation as depiction. Brian's and Jeannie's self-portraits are extreme examples of this; as abstract works with no discernible human form to be seen, they represent their makers purely indexically.

Whereas both these senses of representation are at play in the genre of the self-portrait, discourse on the selfie focuses on representation in Otlet's (1934) sense. In the selfie, the self only seems to go as far as what can be seen. To be sure, some researchers have discussed how selfies perform indexical reference, but the referents are not the self nor aspects thereof, but rather other people, objects, events and ideas.

It may be the case that self-portraits reference the self in both ways and selfies only in one, or it may be that the question has not yet been asked of selfies. It seems possible that particular individuals could become known (even in small social circles) for their style of selfie, though the literature on selfies does not show it. Along these lines, Weng Marc Lim (2017) suggests that further research on the selfie should examine the extent to which aesthetic appreciation matters in the selfie phenomenon.

Beyond a deeper understanding of these genres, what does this mean for practitioners? In its origin, documentation entailed the description of documents to facilitate their retrieval within formal memory institutions (Otlet, 1934; Vickery, 1978). In the past several decades the scope of documentation has broadened to recognize far more documentary forms and sites, but description is still a central part of documentation and information science. For the description of art, guidelines exist such as those developed by Baca and Harpring (2016) that offer a framework for describing both the form (e.g., measurements and materials/techniques) and content of a work of art. In the self-portrait, the two epistemic senses of "of oneself" blur the distinction between form and content, as the form is also content. Recent work has been exploring the prospect of developing affect tags for art—ways to describe art in terms of emotional expression rather than just representative depiction—but these focus only on the content (e.g., Lopatovska, 2016). My study suggests that the form may also be important for such description, at least in some artistic genres (the self-portrait being one of them).

5.1.2.2 *Temporality and Document Experience*

My study also sought to lend some insight to the temporal aspects of documentation. Unlike a baseline-format image on a slow internet connection rendering one line at a time, the creation of a self-portrait is not a straightforward, linear matter. The time of documentation is richly textured. My findings offer some concepts for understanding the creation of a document as part of the flow of time: taking breaks, stepping back, tension and relaxation, the hump, and handling mistakes.

Of course, it is an open question as to which, if any, of these concepts apply to documentation experiences outside self-portraiture or perhaps art. That determination will have to await further research. It is worth noting, however, that in my earlier study of documentation at a Japanese garden (Gorichanaz, 2016), I discovered stepping back to be an important part of the gardener's process. Moreover, taking breaks and stepping back seem to be crucial parts of writing research, not least dissertations.

5.1.3 Information in the First Person

In this dissertation, I have presented a first-person study of self-portraiture as an information activity. This perspective has been consistent from literature review to methodology to findings. Drawing on work in the philosophy of science, I have suggested that the first-person perspective has been unduly conflated with constructivism and cognitivism and has not been sufficiently explored in information science. I contend that the findings my study has generated could not have been generated outside the first person; nor could my contributions to information behavior theory, discussed in §5.1.1.2, have been made. The power of this approach can be seen most clearly in Justin's experience: His trip to Colorado gave him a deep and energizing self-confidence, and after returning to Philadelphia he brought himself to his project differently. Justin maintains that the trip and this shift in mindset were critical in his completion of the project, and yet this is not visible from the outside.

One of the outcomes of my study was a first-person model of documentation, presented in §4.2.2. What use is the first person? To give one example, knowing the potential obstacles in a given domain or activity can allow information professionals to anticipate people's information needs as well as the nature of information sources that may be helpful in dealing with those obstacles. Essentially, information professionals can serve their constituents better by putting themselves in their shoes, and first-person models can help information professionals to do that. I see the first-person perspective to be supplementary, rather than antagonistic, to the third-person perspectives offered by metatheories such as sociocognitivism. As such, the findings from my

study should be understood as enriching, rather than challenging.

5.1.4 Understanding and Experience

5.1.4.1 Understanding

I have suggested that the concept of understanding offers a way to explore human epistemology in a holistic way, going beyond the knowledge-contributing information sources that have been typically studied in information science. As I defined it in §2.2.1, ontic understanding is a coherent and self-transparent epistemic network that is constructed by a conscious agent over a background of ontological understanding. Ontological understanding, in turn, I have defined as a perceptive and situated engagement with the environment.

My empirical study has borne some examples of ontic understanding. These examples have been described as chains of reference (after Briesen, 2014) that show how heterogeneous information comes together, bound by narrative structure, in the building of ontic understanding. Many of the pieces of information that contributed to these understandings have not traditionally been objects of study in information science. In my study, I allowed this diversity to emerge by casting a very wide net.[1] Approaching the topic in this way allowed me to recognize as informative aspects of existence that I may not have seen otherwise. In my view, this brings us closer to satisfying both Elgin's (2017a) call (which I quoted on p. 31) for "bigger game"—a way to study understanding holistically—and Ocepek's (2018) call for information science to recognize the breadth of phenomena that are informative in human life.

More broadly, my work has shown that information science has much to gain from integrating aspects of philosophy. In the past, some scholars have argued that information science does not need philosophy—most famously, Zwaldo (1997). However, I think it is clear that an a-philosophical field of research makes undue assumptions that

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[1]The metaphor is apt: According to Richard Capobianco (2015), both Heidegger and Heraclitus spoke of humans existing in relation to Being (or Logos) such that humans continually reach out to Being and bring back understanding. To describe this "bringing back," Heidegger used the German word *einholen*, which is typically used to describe fishermen drawing in their nets.

it cannot see. Bawden and Robinson (2018) have gone so far as to suggest, following Floridi, that information science can be considered the applied branch of philosophy of information. At present I am agnostic on this point, but I do maintain that philosophy can, at least, be *useful* to information science.

5.1.4.2 Information Experience

For some years, information experience has been a growing area of inquiry in information behavior and information literacy, as I described in §2.2.2. My study has contributed to this research area by arguing for and demonstrating the utility of research in the first person. If information experience is supposed to plumb the nature of people's being informed and becoming informed, as Bruce et al. (2014) and others contend, then it seems to me that examining experience from the inside is essential.

In this study, I have drawn from Johnson's (2007) philosophical work rallying for the unification of epistemology and aesthetics, and Heidegger's (1927/2010) for the unification of epistemology and ontology, in order to draw a more holistic picture of what "being informed" can really mean (qua understanding). Further research in information experience can build upon this philosophical groundwork to construct and test more targeted hypotheses.

5.2 SPECULATING ON SELF-DOCUMENTATION AND ETHICS

I would now like to take the opportunity to take a small step beyond the literature that I reviewed in Chapter 2 and discuss some ethical issues.

A number of philosophers have connected art with ethics. As Wittgenstein (1961, p. 83e) wrote in a journal entry: "The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connexion between art and ethics." That is, both art and ethics are defined in relation to the eternal—the perspective of the universe. Art calls us to step outside our usual way of looking at things, and to look from a different vantage. Heidegger (1971, 1977), recall, saw art as an antidote to certain ills in modern society, thereby also taking an ethical stance.

Considering self-portraiture as an example of self-documentation, we have an opportunity to apply these ideas much more broadly to human life. As Michel Foucault (1997, p. 261) said, "Couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object but not our life?"

5.2.1   A Changing Sense of Self

In my view, the self is not an ultimate, discrete metaphysical category. It is unclear what it would even mean for that to be the case. Rather, the self is real in a constructionist sense; that is, the self is a concept. All concepts are teleological. This means that what is understood as the self can change in different milieus and for different purposes. In §2.2.3, I discussed technology and selfhood, and then in §4.1.4 I explored how the self is conceptualized in the selfie genre.

Based on my findings, it seems that a new concept of the self is emerging. This is evidenced in the documentary characteristics of the selfie, which express a networked, data-driven view of the self. Moreover, others, such as Day (2014b) and Floridi (2013), have written on our sense of the self changing in this way: our notion of personal identity is increasingly wrapped up in the brands we like and products we buy, the attention we get on social media, etc. Similarly, Sherry Turkle (2011) argues that when we communicate online, we are apt to see ourselves as communicating with objects rather than with other subjects. Not only that, but in the age of big data, "neoliberal subjects come to understand their *selves* to be aggregated statistically," as Steve Anderson (2017, p. 17) writes in *Technologies of Vision*, a media-archaeological study of the relationship between data and images. A recent feature in *Wired*, by Henri Gendreau (2017) points out that this may particularly be the case with the present generation of teens (at least from the vantage of marketing companies), who "view their identity as a curated composition" (p. 26).

Indeed, this is not a new observation. Harré (1998) in his psychological theory of personhood, wrote that more and more people seem to interpret identity in terms of what social groups one belongs to. Douglas Rushkoff (2009) sees the origin of this sit-

uation in the rise of modern commerce, colonialism and mass production: According to Rushkoff, through these historical currents people came to involve corporate brands in their self-understanding, and today internet commerce has made this much more acute, such that, by all appearances, many people act as if mindless consumption is the only way for them to be themselves.

5.2.2 Tensions in the Networked Sense of Self

There seems to be some tension in the emergence of this new concept of selfhood. Any number of scholars have expressed as much, not least Day (2014b) and Turkle (2011). Emphasizing the digitally-networked nature of the self seems to be at odds with the idea of the self as a coherent entity. While we must be careful to not ascribe too many of our ills (or boons) to the nebulous entity we call "the Internet," there does seem to be at least some directional truth to the worries that have been voiced.

Erfani and Abedin (2018) review the empirical literature on social networking sites and psychological well-being. They find that most of the research reports positive effects of social networking, such as social support, social capital and authentic self-presentation. On the other hand, several of the studies offered a dissenting point of view, showing that time spent on social media and the number of social media connections a person has are negatively correlated with life satisfaction and measures of well-being. Erfani and Abedin discuss a number of limitations with the literature, including that it lacks theoretical grounding and has by and large sampled from young and healthy student populations, so the generalizability of these findings is questionable. Focusing on the negative side, Stephen Marche (2012), in an *Atlantic* article, reviews a number of academic studies and accounts from popular culture to broach the question of how social media is changing along with selfhood. Marche reports that, by all appearances, social media exacerbates loneliness and in turn affects users' sense of self and contributes to mental and physical illness. In reflecting on what it means for us to be always on and connected, Marche concludes: "Solitude used to be good for self-reflection and self-reinvention. But now we are left thinking about who

we are all the time, without ever really thinking about who we are" (para. 38). In the context of my study here, this point seems to emphasize that supposed shortcuts to understanding don't actually take you to understanding.

Jaron Lanier (2010), another critic of this emerging concept of selfhood, worries that "we are beginning to design ourselves to suit digital models of us" (p. 39). Lanier argues that these models leave out all human weirdness and unpredictability, which Lanier sees as inextricable from empathy and humanity. Considering this with respect to my study, I would suggest that our overlooking these aspects of humanity stems from a lack of recognition for pathic knowledge and the necessary smoothing and obfuscation that occurs in any information system.

Naturally, people experiencing tension in their self-concept seek to resolve that tension. Anderson (2017) sees this, the desire for individuals to reassert their agency in self-representation, as "precisely what lies behind the current trend of self-documentation online... a reassertion of the visible self as a gesture of defiance at having one's identity reduced to abstract metadata" (p. 12). As Floridi (2013, p. 13) says, "we construct, self-brand, and re-appropriate ourselves in the infosphere by using blogs and Facebook entries, homepages, YouTube videos, and Flickr albums, fashionable clothes, and choices of places we visit, types of holidays we take, and cars we drive, and so forth." However, I suspect that as long as these reactions happen in social computing, they cannot escape the problem. Day (2014a) also makes this conclusion:

> But now, just as neoliberalism has reversed the modernist notions of the "public" and "private" spheres, so, too, does social computing shape the self as a person of logical possibilities (rather than hypothetical potentials) and present information (i.e., "aboutness") as the source of documentary evidence. Where the self was, so the commodity shall be. (Day, 2014a, p. 75)

How can this situation be remedied? To be sure, the answer is not to do away with the internet—Pandora's box has already been opened. For some insight, we can turn to the work of Norbert Wiener (1954), a founding figure in cybernetics and consequently information ethics. Wiener wrote that human flourishing depends on people's freedom to perform the creative actions they wish to realize their own possibilities. Wiener

([1954](), p. 106) argues that "what compulsion the very existence of the community and the state may demand must be exercised in such a way as to produce no unnecessary infringement of freedom." Today, what Wiener called "the community and the state" should also extend to social media and other internet companies. The extent to which these entities infringe on the free expression of selfhood—e.g., by promoting a concept of the self as a conglomeration of corporate interests—they are ethically problematic, and the extent to which they promote free expression, they are virtuous. The problem, apparently, is discerning what is really going on. Lanier writes:

> It is astonishing and disheartening to hear the unrelenting drumbeat of folktales about how the internet "empowers" people, causes, or businesses, even when by absolute measure the subjects in the stories are often poorer and less powerful than they used to be. (Lanier, 2010, p. 195)

5.2.3 Self-Portraiture as a Free Expression of Self

In developing his theory of personhood, Harré (1998) wanted to reclaim identity to be what makes a person the unique individual that they are, rather than what social groups they belong to or how they are positioned in social computing systems. In this regard, it seems to me that self-portraiture is an ethical means of self-documentation and an effective reaction against the pressures of the emerging, digital-technological sense of the self. In my study, Emily specifically conceptualized her project in this way. For example, she said in one of her session interviews: "It's also very satisfying to spend so much time making a picture come together. Especially now, when it's so easy to just snap a picture on your iPhone."

Moreover, self-portraiture allows more freedom of expression than does even digital photography; in the parlance of Goodman (1976), it is syntactically dense and semantically replete (i.e., it offers a bigger vocabulary and syntax). As Goodman explains, this allows reference to take place through the mode of expression rather than only resemblance. Elgin (2017b) wrote similarly on exemplification. As Jeannie said in our follow-up interview, "I have no desire to make photorealism... I'm coming from an expressionist feeling, where you want to have somebody get a feeling about what you're doing but not necessarily identify 'that is something.'"

Given this capacity, there are endless ways to interpret a work of art. And every time one returns to a work of art, they come with a new situation—with different things on their mind, etc. As Elgin (2017b, p. 287) writes, "The picture is inexhaustible. There is always more to be found." So a self-portrait is a kind of self-document that leaves openings and possibilities for the future. Even though it is already written, it can always be rewritten.

This is different from many other forms of recorded information. In general, we seem value recorded information precisely for its inability to change or be rewritten. However, as Geoffrey Bowker (1997) has pointed out in the business context, sometimes ceaseless remembering is more a straitjacket than an asset. It seems to me that for individuals, too, the past can drag like fetters, slowing or stopping someone from moving on with their life. This is the logic of the right to be forgotten, which is one's right to "determine the development of their life in an autonomous way, without being perpetually or periodically stigmatized as a consequence of a specific action performed in the past" (Mantelero, 2013, p. 231).

In this spirit, Floridi (2013) positions forgetting as a moral issue. He writes:

> Recorded memories tend to freeze the nature of their subject. The more memories we accumulate and externalize, the more narrative constraints we provide for the construction and development of personal identities. Increasing our memories also means decreasing the degree of freedom we might enjoy in defining ourselves. Forgetting is also a self-poietic art. ... Capturing, editing, saving, conserving, and managing one's own memories for personal and public consumption will become increasingly important not just in terms of protection of informational privacy... but also in terms of a morally healthy construction of one's personal identity. (Floridi, 2013, p. 223)

In a world where, more and more, we come to be defined as file-selves (Harré, 1984) that are beyond our ken, in my view it becomes increasingly important to assert freedom and autonomy in the places that we can. Following Floridi (2013), one way to do that is to self-document in ways that are multivalent and even facilitate forgetting. The self-portrait is a kind of self-document that achieves this.

5.2.4 Self-Care and the Ontic Trust

As something made, the self-portrait is a site for the free expression of the self. Not only that, but the process of its creation is nourishing for self-construction. As an activity, self-portraiture can be said to contribute to *self-care*. This has been established in the field of art therapy (Alter Muri, 2007); as well, it echoes findings regarding expressive writing as a healing modality (Pennebaker, 1997).

Rafael Capurro (2000) seems to have been the first to discuss self-care in information science. However, the notion that information professionals should nurture aspects of personhood beyond the intellectual is anything but new: Cora Lutz (1978) points out that the earliest known library had an inscription above the door pronouncing it HOUSE FOR HEALING THE SOUL.

A nascent framework for conceptualizing self-care comes from the last works of Foucault (1988). Many of us today are familiar with the Delphic maxim *know thyself*, but Foucault worries that we have all but forgotten the Socratic maxim *care for thyself*. As a course correction, Foucault investigates how principles of self-care were enacted in ancient times. As Foucault writes, one ancient technology of self-care was the personal notebook, which was used "to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self" (Foucault, 1997, p. 211). These notebooks were fragmentary, but their result was not merely a collection of disjointed scraps; rather, they contributed to a new whole, along with the writer themselves. As Foucault (1997, p. 213) writes, "writing transforms the things seen or heard 'into tissue and blood.'" As a practice of self-construction, ancient people regularly returned to their personal notebooks for nourishment.

It is worth noting that Pierre Hadot (1987/1995), an eminent scholar of ancient philosophy and culture, disagrees somewhat with Foucault on these matters. In Hadot's view, Foucault (1988, 1997) focused exclusively on self-care as interiorization, whereas

> this movement of interiorization is inseparably linked to another movement, whereby one rises to a higher psychic level, at which one encounters another kind of exteriorization... a new way of being-in-the-world... one identifies oneself with an "Other": nature, or universal reason, as it is

present within each individual. This implies a radical transformation of perpective, and contains a universalist, cosmic dimension, upon which, it seems to me, M. Foucault did not sufficiently insist. Interiorization is a going beyond oneself; it is universalization. (Hadot, 1987/1995, p. 211)

Foucault (1988, 1997) and Hadot (1987/1995) discuss a number of such ancient technologies from which one can discern a handful of general principles that seem to make them conducive to self-care:

- bringing oneself out of mundane setting (physically and/or mentally) in order to reflect

- revisiting the past and imagining the future in order to fully inhabit the present

- comparing the self to something outside (external reality, universal reason, social rules, God, etc.)

- investigating the interplay between one's private and public lives

- looking at the mundane details of life

The experiences of my participants suggest that self-portraiture is conducive to self-care in that it exhibits these very principles.

I do not see self-care as a solipsistic, uncaring or egotistical practice. On the contrary. As I mentioned on page 42, under Floridi's (2013) postulation of the ontic trust, all beings have obligations toward each other and even toward being as such. All humans serve as ontic trustees, of course, but as Floridi and other scholars (Bawden & Robinson, 2018; Fyffe, 2015; Van der Veer Martens, 2017) have emphasized, information professionals have the particular role of being the most fervent stewards of the ontic trust. Thus I follow Hadot (1987/1995) in seeing self-care as a path to ultimately transcending the self, to see oneself as "belonging, that is, both to the whole constituted by the human community, and to that constituted by the cosmic whole. . . 'Plunging oneself into the totality of the world'" (Hadot, 1987/1995, p. 208).

So far in discussions of the ontic trust, the focus has been information objects other than the self. However, selves are also information objects and should therefore be

subjects of stewardship. On my view, which is consistent with the ecological view of Floridi's (2013) and others' information ethics, selves are clusters of experience—we are all little corners of the universe. We must take care of ourselves because that is tantamount to taking care of the universe. It may be worth noting that this has been expressed in any number of spiritual traditions. For example, the Christian Bible teaches that the self is a temple: "Do you not know that your body is a temple...and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19). So we have an ethical obligation to care for ourselves (as we are reminded by the directive to secure your own oxygen mask before helping others), but of course we must likewise help others to care for their own selves. Without getting too far afield, even Buddhist thought, which some say denies the existence of the self, recognizes the concept of the Bodhisattva, a person who cultivates themselves in a particular way in order to help others (Gyatso, 1995).

In his analysis of corporatism, Rushkoff (2009) argues that one of the chief evils of corporatism is that it severs humans from each other, compelling them to instead atomistically relate to abstractions (e.g., brands). Scholars have expressed similar worries about the informationalization of society (e.g., Day, 2014b; Floridi, 2013; Turkle, 2011). Refocusing on the ontic trust and the role of self-care therein may be a route to rectifying this situation.

Thus, grandiose though it may sound, I contend that self-portraiture and other self-care–conducive forms of self-documentation are meaningful ways to contribute to the ontic trust. This is the case when one creates a self-portrait on one's own, of course, but we should not overlook the potential of engaging others (patrons, users, customers, visitors, etc.) in creating their own self-documents.

5.2.5 Putting Speculation into Practice

As an exploratory, philosophical investigation, the research I have presented here is most valuable for its capacity to precipitate new research questions. As I have just discussed, however, this work has some implications for the practice of self-portraiture in the building of understanding and the care of the self, both of which can be under-

stood as ethical directives within the framework of the ontic trust. This suggests some possibilities for technology.

As Hepworth et al. (2014) have argued, phenomenological findings are useful for identifying tacit and implicit dimensions that should feed into the design of future information systems. My research suggests that information systems can facilitate understanding through encouraging periodic self-reflection and questioning, and by involving documents which are multivalent, allowing for endless reinterpretation, as a spark for creative thinking. It also makes clear that understanding involves manifold information phenomena that go beyond the forms of recorded information that information science has historically equipped itself to deal with. Technologies could harness this reality by acknowledging this. To offer a simple example, in a classroom situation (conceptualizing the classroom as an information system), a teacher could ask their students: How does that make you feel? What does that remind you of? How is that like or unlike x? Students' reflecting on such questions would increase their understanding by virtue of increasing the self-transparency of their epistemic processes.

To speak of digital technology, this study reveals a rich opportunity to build a system for presenting the temporal development of a piece of artwork. Most simply, this system could present each piece as it unfolded in chronological time, but it could just as well present the work in the logic of experiential time.

More generally, as an outgrowth of this project I envision a social media tool where users do not identify themselves in terms of types and groups, but rather as unfolding, ever-in-progress, multivalent individuals. What if there was a place online where all people could do is say, "This is who I am now"? In my view, the *all* in the previous sentence would manifest not as a limitation, but as a freedom. On Facebook, users say who they are through a handful of pre-scripted interactions: filling out the About Me section, along with their relationship status, education and job history, etc., posting periodic status updates and photos, and the like. This level of abstraction for defining personhood quickly becomes stifling. On the social media tool I envi-

sion, instead, users can continually express themselves in any format in an endless stream—something like a Tumblr blog, but where the content is chiefly *created* rather than *selected.* The webpage I have created to tell the stories of the participants in my study could be considered an inchoate form of the social network I describe here. Developing a more robust prototype of the website is something that I or others could do in the future, as a way to bring the theoretical contributions of my dissertation into the wider world.

5.3 REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH

5.3.1 Recruitment

As Hemmig (2008) remarked in his review article, virtually all studies of artists' information behavior recruited those affiliated with academic institutions. As Hemmig recounts, it has been espoused that this is because artists are difficult to contact and communicate with outside academia. Even so, my study successfully engaged artists outside academia—including hobbyists and professional artists with and without day jobs—and therefore I thought it worth a few words of reflection on why that might be the case.

Given that many, if not most, artists now establish themselves online, either in personal websites or just social media accounts, they are reachable with ease. While conducting this research I was blessed to be living in Philadelphia, a city with a vibrant artistic community. Thus there was no shortage of possible artists for me to contact. When I contacted artists about my project, I used what I thought would be an intriguing subject line: "What is it like to make a self-portrait? A research study." In a succinct message, I introduced myself and the project, and asked recipients to reply if they were interested, at which point I would provide more details.

To speak of those participants who agreed to and followed through with my project, first and foremost, they found my project interesting, and they became invested in seeing it through. This fit in with my metatheories and methodology, which suggest that participants should participate in and take ownership of knowledge production along-

side the researcher. Mutual rapport and interest in the project began from my first email (in the cases where I did not already know the artist personally), which continued through to our final meeting. I respected the artists' lives outside my project and gave them ample time (about five months) to complete their pieces; I sent reminders periodically, and the feedback I received on these reminders was that they were professional and helpful.

The project also was an opportunity for some publicity for the artists. Though at first I foresaw this only in terms of the publications to result from my study, one of my participants suggested that I arrange a public exhibition of the self-portraits. As I mentioned on page , I was able to do this in a gallery space at Drexel, which provided a more meaningful publicity opportunity for the artists.

5.3.2 Methods

Though my methods were successful in generating some insights, I'd like to take the opportunity to reflect on what I might do differently, were I to conduct this study again.

First, I designed a protocol to be done by each artist at the end of each art-making session. However, I learned that not all artists work in discrete sessions. Jeannie, for example, works in "stolen moments," as she said, and many of the artists worked on multiple pieces at once. Still, my participants seemed to understand the spirit of the requirement, and they did the self-interview at certain points along the way where they thought they'd have enough to say for it. What I sought in designing this method was to get near to a think-aloud protocol without imposing too much of a burden on the participants. Perhaps a way to improve this method would be to design a customized schedule for each participant, based on a discussion about their typical workflow prior to the study's beginning. In Jeannie's case, for instance, I might ask her to do the protocol at the end of each day in which she touched the painting, regardless of how many times she did so.

Next, I had assumed that all the participants would do their recordings on their

smartphone and that they'd have their phones at hand while working so that the recording could take place immediately following the session. This was not so for Jeannie, who had no smartphone and did her recordings on a desktop computer that was in a different room from where she did her painting. This meant there was some delay for her to get to the recordings, and we also encountered some technical difficulties regarding file format and noise. Again, this sort of issue could be sidestepped by discussing these limitations and alternative possibilities ahead of time. For instance, it might have been preferable for Jeannie to write her self-interviews rather than audiorecord them, or perhaps I could have provided Jeannie a recording device for the duration of the study.

Last, I expected that I would analyze the visual material in a systematic way according to principles from visual methods. However, I found that in my study the visual and the verbal were inextricable; the visual material could not stand on its own. I did refer to the visual material throughout my analysis, chiefly in order to better understand the verbal material, and the visual material is of interest as an illustrative support of the verbal material; still, I would have liked to find a more secure place for the visual material in my analysis. This may have been inevitable, given my interest in studying not the content of the artworks but rather their development; as far as I can tell, visual methods have not yet been developed to explore the development of visual works, instead being concerned only with the content of finished pieces. Still, it seems to me that this is a gap waiting to be bridged.

5.3.3 Limitations and Further Questions

This study has a number of limitations. To be sure, it has a relatively small number of participants and is situated within a metatheoretical framework, and so it—like any study—has a particular perspective. I have already addressed the consequences of these limitations in §3.6.

One other limitation of this study is its focus on self-portraiture. Conceptually, I chose self-portraiture because it is an artful form of self-documentation. This was also

useful methodologically because it allowed me to enroll artist participants who worked in a broad range of styles and media. (Had I asked the artists to do a landscape, for instance, I may not have had any abstract expressionist participants.) However, my study does not clarify the extent to which my findings are relevant to self-portraiture, or to art in general, or to self-documentation, or to autotelic documentation, or to documentation in general.

Teasing that apart will require further studies. For now, I can say that self-portraiture may not be so different from other sorts of artwork, at least for some artists. As I mentioned in §4.4, not all my participants engaged with ti esti questions. Indeed, some artists specifically emphasized to me that as they worked they didn't think of their action as self-portraiture. When I asked them the difference between self-portraits and other works, they said things like, "Self-portraits are more personal, but then again all my art is personal." As a hypothesis, it seems to me that the eidos of self-portraiture is really in its stages of ideation, and once the artist reaches a certain point, it is just like any other piece of work.

Also, by all appearances some artists just don't find self-portraits at all interesting or personally meaningful. Emily, for instance, said she wasn't really interested in painting herself. She enrolled in my project all the same, but it is interesting that even while doing her self-portrait she naturally gravitated toward other spinoff projects—and it may be telling that she didn't manage to finish her self-portrait until several months after the deadline. So, though I conceptualized self-portraiture as an autotelic activity, an aberration in my study is that the self-portrait was an assignment.

Thus, this project does not shed any light on the motivations for doing self-portraits in the first place. Why would an artist do a self-portrait today? It is an interesting question. Discerning that will require further research on artists who have already done self-portraits. However, that may result in a less-detailed look at the project's unfolding. Initially, what I can say based on the literature I explored in §4.1 is that there seem to be two main impetuses for self-portraiture: the ti esti question on one hand, and pure convenience on the other (i.e., oneself as a model is always at hand).

Finally, this study may have unduly set up a dichotomy between the self-portrait and the selfie. I wished to make the point that it is not useful to collapse these two genres. However, it is clear that sometimes selfies can be personally meaningful, self-constructive, etc.—all the things that self-portraits are conceptualized as being. It seems likely that selfies can also be a route for the free expression of the self. But it is not yet clear when they are so, and when they are "just something everyone does." A future study precipitating from the discussion here could be similar to the study I've presented here, but on selfie-making rather than self-portraiture.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

> Life can only be understood backwards;
> but it must be lived forwards.
>
> ———————————————
> Journal entry
> Søren Kierkegaard, 1844

This has been a study of self-portraiture rooted in human information behavior and document theory, drawing from various corners of philosophy along the way. I began with an investigation of the self-portrait as a document. I found that the essence of the self-portrait, pulling oneself outward over time, is in the experience of the artwork's making rather than in the finished product. I then developed a framework for exploring the making of a self-portrait from the perspective of the maker. I illustrated this through an empirical study of self-portraiture with seven Philadelphia artists.

As we have seen, self-portraiture is introspective and processual, integrating the past, present and future. Given these qualities, the self-portrait is a prime site for self-exploration and understanding. The understandings built in self-portraiture may not be predictable; a self-portrait, and a dissertation—and indeed life itself, as Kierkegaard says—can only be understood backwards. So let us go all the way backwards and end where we started: with the concept of self-documentation.

Self-documentation is everywhere. We move through life making traces of ourselves, some very meditated and consequential. Others less so. Just today, for example, while out for a walk, I saw somebody's self-document inscribed on the 33rd Street sidewalk: I ♡ MAX NORRIS. To be sure, there may be more academic interest in self-documents employing technology more sophisticated than a fingertip in wet concrete. But the point is that self-documentation is human and ubiquitous, and only recently have we developed the tools to study it.

As we have seen, the field of documentation was once concerned with describing and organizing artifacts of scientific knowledge, narrowly defined. Over the past few

decades, scholars have applied document theory to a widening range of lived phenomena, showing how the material, cognitive and sociocultural are intertwined. And only in the past few years has it become apparent that an important constituent of the documents we humans make are manifestations of our selves.

The self-portrait is one example, but it is not the oldest. That distinction probably goes to the autobiography (which itself is multifarious), an early example of which is Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, written around 400 AD. What other self-document genres are there, and how do they play out in modern society? How do we form them, and they form us? These are questions that further research could take up.

As Floridi (2013) has said, today's documentary technologies are technologies of self construction. If this is the case, then self-documentation technologies are technologies of self construction par excellence. Floridi also points out that nowadays, in more and more situations, information about us *is us.* For the most part, we do not get to define that information. Self-documentation is one opportunity to do so—that is, to take control of who you are. Recall James' (1890/1950) early postulation of the extended self, the blurring between what I call *me* and what I call *mine.* In the realm of art, we can see this by doing an image search for the name of an artist; it is more difficult to find a photo of an artist than reproductions of their artwork—not so for most people. And so, if selfhood is in question, then the study of self-documentation could be a door to its answering.

Just as the autonomous self-portrait ushered in the self-concept of liberal modernity, today's self-documentation may show tomorrow's self-concept. Thus we can look to self-documentation practices that now predominate and ask, "Where are we going?"

As I have discussed, a dominant form of self-documentation today, and one that is often conflated with the self-portrait, is the selfie. In my view, the two stand in contradistinction. Compared to the self-portrait, the selfie is more communicative, instantaneous, present-focused and democratized. Moreover, the selfie seems to manifest a networked way of being rather than one of individualism. Are all these traits part of our idea of the good society? Which are and which are not? Of course, these

questions should not be understood deterministically. We have seen the capacity of individuals to challenge this trajectory; as Emily said in one of her session interviews, "It's ... satisfying to spend so much time making a picture come together. Especially now, when it's so easy to just snap a picture on your iPhone."

Another critical issue in the study of self-documentation is discerning the boundaries of the phenomenon. Georges Gusdorf (1991), in his study of autobiography, suggested that all inscriptions are inscriptions of the self. This reminds me of Heidegger's (1927/2010) realization that all understanding is essentially self-understanding. Therefore we might wonder the extent to which all documentation is self-documentation. It would seem to be a matter of degree; surely one's Twitter profile is more a self-document than an essay they wrote on the War of 1812. Perhaps, following some Eastern philosophers (e.g., Nishida, 1921/1990), we could conceptualize reality itself as experience and the self as a moment therein. Thus the boundary between self-documentation and non–self-documentation is just as blurry as that between the self and other. However, we must leave some questions for tomorrow.

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APPENDIX A   EXPERIENTIAL NARRATIVES

A.1   BRIAN

I used to say everything I do is a self-portrait, so what does it mean now that I'm going to really do a self-portrait? I've been putting this off for so long because who knows what might happen. But now it's time. I put on waltz music.

The canvas I was going to use is no good because I don't have the right size stretcher boards. I find a different piece of canvas that will work, stretch it, gesso it and hang it on my studio wall, partly covering a blank canvas—another piece in progress.

While the gesso dries, I'm stirring up memories. Where I came from, what I've experienced, things that have made me. I want to try to consolidate all this into a picture that sums me up. I want to find a way to say all the things that can't fit into words. I'm thinking of the rural landscape where I grew up compared to the city where I live now, and how I want to be in both places at once.

Summer's gone and winter is in sight, and this has me a bit melancholic. I mix up brownish pink and blue oils and block these in with a palette knife, pink at the top of the canvas and blue at the bottom. These are soft colors, not as obtrusive as what I'd usually pick. Now I start brushing, smoothing it out. This is relaxing. Soon I switch from a brush to an old t-shirt. Back and forth I wipe, using my whole body. The shirt saturates with paint, and the transition becomes even smoother. It reminds me of looking at a lake, that pull and push, feeling warm in the sun. Working this way relaxes me, which helps when life is not so relaxing.

While I work with the shirt, I make some marks with dry mediums, like charcoal and graphite. That relaxes me, too, how when the paint goes over those marks, it subtly changes, getting less bold.

I go have a cigarette and then sit with the painting to see if there's any more I can do today. I decide there is, but first I let the paint dry. In the meantime I work on

Poetic Display A.1 Brian's self-portraiture experience

With waltz music on I hang up the white canvas
With pink and blue oils I'm stirring up memories
And now I'm painting myself, whole body at the wall
Left right, up and down, tension relaxation
Now marks, now release

I write on the piece and then
I ask what it has to say
I give what it asks for:
Oil, charcoal, colored pencil, pastel
It may look fast, but I work slow

It's writing like those memories
Like dreams I'm processing
Now on to who I am: white house paint
Because every day I'm something new
But you can still see through:
who I was

The fundamental problem of
Time folding itself up
Into a single image

One last thing
I ask me for:
Red fingerprint
And that's what
I have to say

other pieces.

I don't use sketches or external reference material in my work. Just my memories and emotions. But as I work, the piece itself becomes reference material, showing me to some extent the way forward.

With the ground in place, I add referential marks to show more complete thoughts. I use oil sticks, oil pastel, colored pencil and graphite. Very slowly I work up some pink at the bottom left—it's almost figurative. It's still abstract, but things are starting to evoke a sense of narrative: from where I was to where I am now. Different marks reference different points in my life. Some of them are almost like written language but not quite, like those fuzzy memories that you can't quite make out. It's difficult to represent yourself in a painting, just like it's difficult to remember conversations from when you were 8.

Figure A.1: Brian's self-portrait

This isn't painting so much anymore as drawing. I grew up drawing, so it's a nod to that. I like having something tactile and hard. That's why I work on the wall, how it's solid. It's a stress release, pushing against the wall that pushes back. It feels good, whether it's leaning up close or standing back and making quick marks. Though, even the quick ones are slow and intentional. Though it's relaxing, there is some tension because the aesthetic here is not quite right. But it's late and I'm getting tired, so the tension will have to wait till tomorrow to resolve. I'll work on what I see in the next session.

The next day I put on waltz music again. The painting before me is a conglomeration of my past. That's who I was. Now on to who I am. I'm on a white acrylic house paint kick and that's what I reach for. It's thick and opaque. I don't want to block out all those nice moments from yesterday, so I paint some of the white a little

translucent. Even when I've done it I scratch through the white, drawing my way back in time. Whoever you are, you can still see who you were before. Maybe if this was a comic book panel, the next panel would be all white. So here I'm just gesturing toward that. From far away it will read as white, but if people take the time to get close and slow down, they'll see all the interaction. They'll see more of me.

This piece is feeling more like me now. Maybe it's because I had a better day overall. But anyway I'm working a bit faster now, feeling more hopeful. It's almost a runner's high what I feel, that this painting is coming together. That tension from yesterday is going away.

Now I need to take a breather. I might finish this tonight. I'm going to have a beer and stare at the picture. Hopefully I'll come to terms with it how it is or figure out what else it needs. I have a feeling that it still needs at one or two more moves on it for completion.

The waltz music is still on when I come back. I've thought about this piece, and I decided I want to bring out some more highlights in the upper left, which I want to act as an entry way into the rest of the painting. Like the prologue to a biography.

I also make some marks with graphite and crayon at the bottom right. I'm thinking about how this piece will be read. I think it's a left-to-right painting, or top-left to middle-bottom-right. It's the story of the progression of myself, of the coherence of consciousness.

One last thing, on impulse: I grab a red oil stick and use my finger to push it in over the white. What is it? What have I done? Maybe it's my beating heart or brain. Maybe it's my fingerprint, or my signature. As soon as I do this, I know the piece is finished.

I clean up a bit, though my studio is a wonderful mess, and now I'm going to have dinner with some friends. We'll catch up, and I'll tell them about what I've learned doing this piece.

Poetic Display A.2 Brianna's self-portraiture experience

Hunched on my table,
Hunched at my table,
It doesn't help my back issues,
But it's worth it.

All this pushing down on me,
Tangled in my hair:
No, it's in my body.

I push charcoal into the canvas,
Knead my stress into the eraser,
Till there's nothing left.

A zombie underpainting, and then
Watery layers, layers and layers,
Smooth. I'm confident, energized.
I work hard on the eyes, because

I don't want to be somebody else.
Even with that crooked part of my nose
My dad told me not to leave out.

It's frustrating, but also comfortable:
First my head is too big, then my hands.
I'm figuring myself out, that's all.

A.2 BRIANNA

First step: taking a photo. I'm going to do a full-body shot. I'll do it crouching on top of my table with an orange curtain draped behind me. I set up light sources to make interesting shadows and highlights—I want it to be fun to draw. Then I have someone take a few photos. Something's not quite right with one of the lamps, so I move it. Perfect. The plan is to stay true to this photo.

I do a sketch to get a feel for it. This helps me decide what I like, what I should focus on, what I should change. I want to exaggerate my proportions while at the same time keeping them believable. Something surreal.

The composition isn't quite right. There's something missing. I'm thinking about weight. Not my physical weight, but where I feel something pushing on me. The spots on my body where I feel pressure. My back issues. In the sketches, I add a bunch of objects to my hair, tangled up. Things that are always weighing down on me, like time and money. When I'm drawing, I put so much pressure on my back. It worries me, but I'd rather make it easier to do art than work with good posture. In the sketch, I'm hunched a little further.

Now I start with the canvas. I use charcoal and a kneaded eraser. I want to get a good shape down first, rather than letting the paint control the shape later on. When I'm thinking, I play around with the eraser. It takes down my stress. I push the charcoal into the canvas until there's nothing left. I don't want any to go to waste. I'm thinking about all these things in my hair. They'll be tedious to paint—I'm not looking forward to it—but they'll make the piece more meaningful.

It's funny: I was putting symbolism into the painting about how time always weighs on me, but now I realize that I wasn't thinking about time at all while I was doing this. I feel energized.

The next day, I'm feeling down. School has me working on things I'm not comfortable with. I'm hoping to become a tattoo artist, but I'm a painter at heart. This means I'm not very neat, whereas tattooing is about cleanliness and how straight your

lines can be. It's 9:30 p.m. and I come back to my self-portrait with a sense of relief, because this is something I can do.

I work on the face today. It's hard. As I draw my ears, I think about how now that I'm doing piercings, I know way too much about ears, and I include the details I never would have seen before. It takes forever to get the eyes correct. The eyes are so important because if you mess up even an eyelash it'll be a different person. When the face is finished, I realize my head is way too big. I need to fix it, but I'll redo the body instead of tampering with the face.

While I work, I forget about my worries from today. Not that I'm totally secure. I'm drawing my skin, and it's bare. I'm always thinking about how bare my skin is. If I'm going to be a tattooist, will people take me seriously? Being a scrawny female doesn't help.

At some point my dad comes in. "You forgot to include that crooked part of your nose," he says. Hearing something like that is better than hearing someone say you're beautiful. I like the thought that the quirks about you can be endearing to someone else.

With the underdrawing finished, I spray it with matte so that the lines don't bleed into the paint. I do the underpainting in green, because it will look good with the orange background. I look like a zombie—pretty cool. Watery layers, and more layers. I think about how many different tones there are in your skin if you really look. I refer to the photograph as I do this, to get the contours right. I don't look at the sketches at all and won't anymore.

I'm using acrylic paint, the expensive kind. I use cheap paintbrushes because I'd rather spend my money on paint. Good paint is thicker and spreads better. Sometimes the brushes work against me, but whatever. I'm refining and rendering the layers. Sometimes I'm just blotting with an empty paintbrush, trying to blend it just right.

I'm getting rid of the objects in my hair. I realize now that it's not important. It felt forced. I was trying to add meaning, but sometimes things don't need extra meaning. I will let my body language express those things, rather than having them literally be

there.

I think about how crazy it is that artists paint themselves in the first place. Who was the first person to ever do it? I wonder how the public perceives people that draw themselves. They might think it's just being narcissistic, but I think it's a time to evaluate yourself and figure out yourself. Sometimes you don't even realize what you look like until you paint yourself.

By the time I'm ready to stop, it's 1:45 in the morning. There were a few times when I thought I'd stop before, but I didn't want to waste paint so I thought I'd do one more little thing, and then I got more energy and wanted to keep going. Even now, everything's cleaned up and I still feel energized. I'll probably be up another hour watching YouTube, and I'll regret it in the morning because I like to get up early but I won't be able to. I wish I could paint in the daytime, but I just can't. I just sit there drinking coffee thinking about doing it instead of actually doing it.

Suddenly the painting has been sitting for two weeks. It's looking really good and I want to see it done, but I've been putting it off. I have other stuff coming up and I need to get this done, so I start working in the daytime this time.

The face is fine, so I avoid that area. Today I focus on the frustrating parts: the other body parts, the stuff I don't have fun with. The hands especially. I have to make the colors out of every single paint color. One section dries and it doesn't match the rest so I have to redo it, but it's okay. I'll finish it later.

Now I finish the hair. I work hard on it, but it doesn't take too long. It's funny how, somehow, dark green makes blonde hair.

Sometimes I feel guilty about working so closely to the photo. I'm doing my own interpretation of it, adding my own color theory, so I don't know why I'm feeling guilty, but there it is.

I'm antsy the whole time. This is why I don't like to work in the day, because I'm always thinking about the next thing I have to do. I'm hurrying, and I keep thinking about how much paint to pour. I don't want to waste it, and I'm already running low. These tubes are $7 each and this one I'm using has like no paint left.

Figure A.2: Brianna's workspace, her near-finished self-portrait on the table

Before I leave for work I take a picture and post it on Instagram. It gets a lot of likes so I feel confident, like at least I'm good at something. Even when it's frustrating, it's nice to be able to take a step back and look at what you've done, and see there's no reason to stress out.

I buy new paints, and a week later I'm finishing this piece up. I have to finish the hands because last time I was too frustrated to work on them. I get frustrated again. This is very hard. And when I think I'm done, I realize they are way too big. It bothers me, but at the same time I like the distortion.

To prevent having to remake colors and try to match parts that already dried, I spray water over the paints on my palette and cover them with plastic wrap. That way I can have a lot prepared and not worry about it drying on me.

I refer to the photo as I work. Sometimes it's frustrating to try and match it. Painting the studded belt, for example: There are at least 20 studs that have to look the same, but at the same time they are reflected differently. Every time I try to replicate the photo, it looks sloppy, so in the end I do my own thing. I imagine where the light should hit and paint it that way. I don't worry about matching the photograph anymore—I just want to do what will look good in the painting.

Now I work on the background. It's the last step because I hate backgrounds.

That's why I'm going into tattooing. So in the painting, I'm not anywhere—it's just color. I use big brushes now. I'm careful not to touch anything else because I don't want to have to redo anything at this point.

I step back a few times as I work today, even though it's too late to make any drastic changes. Sometimes I get frustrated, but stepping back gives me perspective: I can work out the problems that arise.

I work for a few hours in the daytime. Then I go to work and come back, and spend about four more hours finishing up. That gives me two good looks at the painting over the course of the day, and I feel pretty good about it.

I'm still not quite sure if it's done. Some things are never really done, but for me if I see it over the next few days and weeks and don't have the urge to change anything big, then it's done.

A few days later, I decide it's done after all, so that's where I'll leave it.

A.3 BRITT

I let most of the summer go by without doing this self-portrait. My procrastination now has me a little panicked, not least because I'm unsure of my drawing people. But it's time.

The first step is choosing an image. I scroll through my the photos on my iPhone. I want a photo that means something to me, because I'll have this portrait forever and I want it to be something that I can display. I thought about painting an image of me running—that's my main hobby—at a race in Italy this summer, but all the photos looked a little grimy. I settled on a photo of me in Florence, taken during that same trip to Italy. It reminds me of when I studied abroad there 10 years ago. It's me sitting on a ledge in Piazza Michelangelo, which overlooks the whole city. It's a pretty cool view: You can see the skyline, all the buildings and the mountains in the background. I also liked this picture because it was a full body shot and I'm wearing sunglasses, so I won't need to worry as much about getting the facial features and details perfect. So it's not just about me, but also about the background.

Poetic Display A.3 Britt's self-portraiture experience

It starts with panic
Because I've procrastinated
But also because I don't do faces or people

To make it easier I'm using a projector
That's settled

A photo from Florence where I look nice
But more importantly I'm kind of small
So there's more to paint besides just me

With a smartphone app I make it a mosaic
And then load it on the projector

And then I trace the lines in pencil
I decide I'll do the same thing with the colors
Something new

Next week when I get everything aligned again
I mix up a bunch of paint

on my cardboard palette
and slap it on
moving seamlessly between colors

Some of the paint dries out but whatever
It's the cheap stuff anyway

Then next day it's just details
Stepping back and zooming in
I almost overwork it but I stop just in time

I add a neon border and my usual gloss
And call it a day

Once I have the photo, I open it in Prisma, an editing app on my phone, and try out some different effects. I choose a mosaic effect because I like how it looks. Next is projection.

I decided a while back that I was going to use a projector to do the drawing. Setting everything up involves getting a canvas down from a high shelf, killing a cockroach and organizing the living room. I open the image on my computer and project it onto the canvas, and then I trace the contours in mechanical pencil. This helps me place the body, landmarks and horizon, to get everything laid out. While I'm doing this, it strikes me how cool the colors look projected onto the canvas. I get the idea to paint with the projector too, to see how that works out. I've never done that before, but I think I'll do it. The colors are so beautiful I wish I had enough time tonight to start painting, but I'll need to wait until tomorrow night. By now my panic has subsided; things are going well, and now I know that I'll sail through it.

A week later, I have put it on my calendar again to work on this piece. After work I watch some TV and then get to it. As I'm setting up, I realize I made a huge mistake: I had moved the projector since last time, and now I can't get the projection lined up with my drawing from last time. Ian tries to help me line it up, but I make him go away because it still isn't working. I debate just erasing everything and starting over, but then I get it close enough.

As a palette I use the cardboard flap from the packaging of the canvas, and I mix up a lot of colors—my usual working strategy. I like to go seamlessly from color to color, though if there is a big shift I do change brushes. Some of the paint I try to use is all dried up, and it reminds me that I never paint anymore. It's all cheapo stuff anyway, just whatever you can get in a big pack, so I'm not upset about it. I just throw it away.

The canvas is on a kitchen chair leaning against a wall at the back of my living room. I sit on the floor, a little hunched over. This is how I usually paint, even though my back gets sore after a while. Ian is here watching TV. Sometimes I stop to watch, too.

Painting on top of the projection I do my skin, my shirt, my skirt, and then the buildings in the background because they're similar colors. I'm slapping paint on the canvas because I know I'll go back in and outline it later, so I don't need to be precise. Next I do the ledge, then the sky, then the mountains, then the trees. Now I go in with the outlines.

I'm close to being done now, and I feel really good about it. I think it only needs another short session and then it'll be wrapped up. I don't want to overwork it because I tend to do that sometimes and I always end up less happy with it. Anyway, it's near enough to being done that I post a photo on Instagram and it makes me happy that likes are rolling in. I'm also happy about this new process, painting directly over the projection. I think I'll do more paintings that way, maybe other pictures from our trip to Italy.

The next day, again in the evening after work, I don't use the projector. Now it's just cleaning up the details. I've been thinking about it all day at work, so right when I get home I paint for a few minutes while my boyfriend is making dinner. I bring the painting over to the kitchen so I can work in the natural light. I add some highlights and definition using peach and purple. I realize my face is overworked and I freak out a little, because that's how I tend to ruin paintings: because I'm not happy with how they look, but then I add a lot of paint and they look worse. I try to back up.

When the food is ready I stop to eat, and then afterwards I finish up the piece, now in the back of the house. By now the paintbrushes have all dried, so I put them in the sink to soak in water
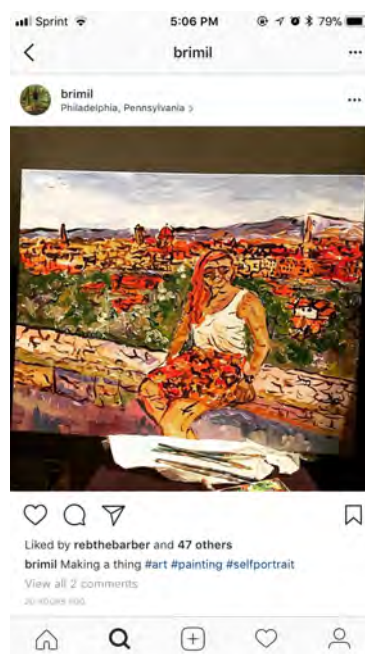

Figure A.3: Britt's self-portrait on Instagram

covered in dish soap. Now I just add little details, then take a step back and look from far away to see what needs work, and then I add more details. I do this 10 times before it's finished.

The last thing to do is add color around the edges of the canvas, a neon red. I saw an art show recently where the artist put neon colors around the edges, and the canvas seemed to glow when it hung on the white wall. It was cool. So that's what I'm going for. It goes well and looks great. Finally, I put on a glaze. It's a shiny sealant which makes the whole thing glossy and brings out the colors. And it's done!

A.4 EMILY

It starts with thinking. What is a portrait? And what is a person? What am I? The answer to that question seems to be different depending on who I'm with and what I'm doing. When I think of who I am, I can't help but think of the important people in my life. Conversations with them help me grasp who I am. Our looks, gestures and emotions are proof of it. There's someone experiencing the same things as you, which makes it real. That's what life's all about: connectedness. So, where does that lead me?

The prospect of making a self-portrait. It's a bit weird. Maybe it stems from a felt need to represent myself realistically. I don't want to seem like I'm glorifying myself. But I'm excited to see where this goes.

I ask my friend to show me how to use his Polaroid camera. I take my first photo, pull it out and let it develop. It's sticky and smells like chemicals, and it gives me a huge thrill. I'm proud to be learning something new. I take several pictures; most come out blurry, but one is actually just how I wanted. I'm excited. In the coming days I keep playing with the camera. I'm living with my brother at the moment, and it's a time in our lives I want to capture. I like the instant results of the Polaroid. It's like freezing time. It gives me the power to take what I see in the world and turn it into a physical thing that is both beautiful to look at and a document of my life. Cameras today are so advanced, and so many of the photographs we take are manipulated with

Poetic Display A.4 Emily's self-portraiture experience

What is a self-portrait, or a portrait,
Or a person? What am I? And
What is life, anyway?

People and connections, I think, and
So that's where I'll start.
I borrow a Polaroid.

It makes a different kind of instant.
A web of instants, mundane
Moments that make me.

Complete with the accidents of life,
Like this: pure electric blue,
Great for a painting.

So that's where I go next: painting me,
Hanging up a photo, sucks me in.
Meditative infinity.

Shine of paint, smell of oil, even when
I'm at work. I think of Cézanne
Lost in fields of color.

Things go wrong of course. It's a steep
Road to the hump. And still I'm
Drawn to other paths

computers or smartphone apps. This camera completely eliminates that option. What you see is what is printed in the photograph. It's very honest. It makes me feel like I am on my way to truly and accurately represent myself and my life in this self-portrait. I feel satisfied and peaceful, and reflecting after each session is part of that.

I'm not sure how this project will develop. I want to make an installation of some sort, a web of photos, inspired by the artist Mary Corey March's interactive installation *Identity Tapestry*, which I found on Pinterest.

But then one day I wake up and decide to go buy a canvas. I ride the bus to Blick and back. I've been thinking about painting a lot. I miss it. And I want my skills to come through in this project, and my skills are in painting and not necessarily something new. And not to mention this film is very expensive.

I'm still learning to use the camera, though. I'm trying to capture the so-called boring details of my life, because that's how life really is. It's not like on Instagram. Sometimes the camera does things that I just don't understand, like produce a completely blue picture. It used to frustrate me when my pictures didn't come out right. I would beat myself up a little bit, but then remind myself that I'm learning to take film photographs for the very first time using a tricky camera. I'm starting to enjoy when pictures come out completely wrong. So much that I decide to use them as inspiration for my painting. Like that all-blue one, that'll be the background color of my painting.

I'm anxious to start painting. There's excitement, but there's also nervousness because it's been a while. Prepping the canvas is meditative. I enjoy the ease and how I empty my mind as I get an even coat of gesso on the canvas. It's a welcome break from normal life, where I need to keep track of time incessantly.

I take a photo of myself on the computer. I pose like I'm hanging up a photo on the wall, as if it's a picture of me making the installation of all the Polaroids. I roughly draw the photo in my sketchbook. This is the scary part, having to get the proportions and everything just right. I draw a grid over the sketch to help me transfer the image to the canvas. The grid is not exact, but even so it's helpful—at least until I abandon it and just draw on the canvas with paint.

A few days later, I really get to painting. I look at the photo and block in shapes. It takes time and several layers before the shapes are right. It'd probably be faster if I drew a thorough sketch first, but I just enjoy the feeling of the brush and mixing colors. I step back every so often to see how the shapes fit together. The only drawback is I don't have a great setup here; I'm sitting cross-legged on the floor. My body aches every so often. Most of the time I don't notice it, but when I do, it distracts me. I do some yoga after painting.

This goes on for some time, with my painting happening in spurts of 40 minutes or so whenever I have the time, in the mornings or evenings. I'm always happy to come back to it. I put on music. The quality of the paint is just mesmerizing, especially watching it go onto the canvas. That really sucks me in. It's seeing the lines I make, being satisfied, and moving on to the next line. I also like the smells of the turpentine and oil—I feel connected to the artists of the past. Now when I walk through the galleries at the Barnes, that smell comes to mind. I hadn't thought about it in a long time. But now I imagine Picasso, Cézanne, Matisse, Pippin, Soutine and Modigliani in their studios with brushes and jars of oil.

Once while painting I have a curious sensation: I look at my photo for reference, measuring by eyeing my paintbrush, and suddenly I just know how big different parts of my body should be. I suppose it's based on my knowledge of anatomy and proportions. I don't even have to look at the photograph; I just paint.

Gradually I move from rendering proportions to rendering light. I mix colors on my palette and create lighter and darker versions of each color. I tend to add yellows to make them lighter and blues/reds to make them darker. I stay away from adding pure black and white, because I don't want it to look bland. I like when little pops of unexpected color jump out at you in a painting, and I enjoy looking for and discovering them when looking at artworks, so I try and recreate that in my own. One of my favorite examples is one of Cézanne's still lifes in the Barnes. There's a blotch of orange paint. Our conservator thinks it was an accident, that he leaned another painting up against that one and it left an ugly scar. When I told her I always notice

it, she suggested that Cézanne actually liked the orange smear and so never corrected it. I found that fascinating, as if this very intimate, humanizing moment—an art "accident"—was memorialized in this way. Speaking of the Barnes, it occurs to me that my painting looks a bit like Matisse. I wonder if that's because I spend so much time looking at Matisse these days.

I near the "hump" of the painting: a period of frustration before I can coast, when I don't like how it looks. It's not truly frustration, but I feel it's not interesting to look at. Painting generally puts me in a good mood, but these flares of frustration rise up. Like today, when I'm painting a flesh tone, an unexpected streak of red appeared on the canvas. No doubt an artifact of my mixing the paint with my paintbrush—what you're not supposed to do. I try to let it go. Those accidents are the fun part, after all. It's completely unintentional, but it's intentional that I leave it. Is lacking thoroughness really a bad thing? Let's call it carefreeness, a daring to embrace imperfection. We don't do that very often. I think that's what Cézanne was getting at.

After the hump, painting feels more technical, less creative. It's a bit saddening, but still there's the smell and meditative quality, so it remains enjoyable. There's also something about spending so much time bringing a picture together, especially nowadays when you can take a picture in an instant on your phone.

I take a lot of breaks. It helps me see what's out of whack or needs adjusting. It gives me fresh eyes. That's on both macro and micro levels: I take lots of small breaks in each session, but also sometimes I let weeks pass between sessions.

In one of these breaks, I conceive another project. I make a pair of Amazon boxes into canvases, and I paint moments that struck me, that I wanted to make last forever. One is a sunset in San Diego, and one is looking up at a canopy. They're abstract and minimalist, with thick planes of color, but with some depth. I think these are self-portraits in a way. No doubt an onlooker would learn a great deal about me. I think I'll incorporate them into the installation.

No, I'm not done yet. Maybe nothing is ever really done—at some point you just have to cut the thread.

A.5 JEANNIE

I don't really make portraits, but I'm excited to do this project. Immediately I think of the only other one I've done, when I was 26 and absolutely destitute, in watercolor.

An image comes to mind: a square painting of just my face. In my alley, amidst a pile of old furniture, I see a frame. Well, it's not a frame—it's the top of an old table that probably had inset glass—but I see it as a frame. I almost go get it, but I hold back. I'm back in the alley after it rains, and I see the frame is still out there, so I get it. It's even nicer up close. Vintage, veneer-covered, real wood, beautiful mitered corners. You don't see that stuff anymore. It's a bit damaged, and the veneer is peeling in a few places, but I think I can do something with it. "This is a good starting place," I say.

I work in fits and starts, just a couple minutes here and there. I'm working on other projects at the same time. It's just how I do things: in stolen moments, stolen from myself. And it's like my workspaces are stolen too, because everywhere in my house is crowded with all sorts of junk I'm always working against, and working on. I think of myself as a bug with a lot of legs, each leg doing something else. It's kind of an ugly picture of myself, thinking all I do is run around working. I'm not sure that's really the appropriate way to live, but I can't help it: I'm a bug.

As the days pass I think from time to time how to use the frame. The opening is 16 inches square. I plan to fit a piece of masonite board inside and paint on that. The frame itself is about an inch deep, so I may carve a relief. That really strikes me as a possibility. But it would be difficult, and I might just want to be more relaxed with this, not developing new techniques.

And I think too about how to depict myself. I'm thinking of myself more and more as a kind of brain. There's so much to me that just the face wouldn't show. I am so much—I don't even know what's down deep. And so much of my existence is what's on the border. I can't even identify myself without thinking about the interface between inside and outside. I'm pulled by the outside world, and I have to deal with

Poetic Display A.5 Jeannie's self-portraiture experience

I have to sit and ask: what am I?
Mostly a brain, but also a bug, legs
Everywhere, straddling inside and out.

The farm, original American dream,
(For my mother, but not for my father)
Only exists in the mind, in politics.

But my sister tries nonetheless:
The columns my mother always wanted,
My granddad's machinery, rusted solid.

Animals, combines, brain, bones,
A daffodil, I sketch on vellum, and
Tape them up, thinking, rearranging.

I start another painting, just
The farm, I can't help it. Now the two
Paintings, conjoined, grow together.

Hurry up, hurry up, I hear inside.
But this is satisfying, so I carry on,
Plumbing disaster notwithstanding.

Yellow paths connect inside and out.
Careful daubs of paint here and there.
Unfinishedness---that's a virtue.

My lifetime supply is almost up.

the outside world, and I am not even possible without what's outside me. So this will be an exploration.

What keeps coming to mind, as an example of this inside/outside thing, is my sister's farm. It was always my mother's dream to live on a farm. She thought it was something to get back to, while my father saw the farm as something to escape. So here my sister is; she's moved to an old plantation in the South all by herself with these two dogs, and she needs help. I'm thinking of going down to help her. And I think about how this ties into farming being part of America's heritage but something that is being lost, more and more but which comes up in politics as the ideal. So part of working on this portrait is me trying to understand the mentality of the person displaced from their farm and the person still living on their farm—that dream of the independent person taking care of themselves, doing things their own way. The only place that's left is in somebody's head, pretty much.

This is very enjoyable. It makes me feel like I'm dealing with these issues, my ambivalence about the farm. It all sort of settles, like slowly stirring a pot to keep it from boiling over.

I go to get the masonite ready, and I'm surprised that none of my pieces are big enough. So I decide I'll stretch a canvas instead, on my trademark redwood stretchers and with some old material from my last sewing job.

It's time to do some sketches. I'll do them in multiple sizes, starting small and working up to a full-size 16-by-16 sketch. Sorting through my paper, I come across some really nice vellum scraps, so I decide to use them. The first piece I take, I draw my face in green chalk. I cut the edges to make the face more tilted and off-center, more what I'm going for. I'm an unbalanced person, and I want to show that. Now I draw the brain on the head, and the farm will be in the brain. Again, I'm just working a few minutes here and there. A lot of my time is spent just looking. The next thing I do is cut off the chin a little bit, and then I redefine the face in pencil. I want the brain open at the top, so the sky of the outer reality and the farm will be continuous. Next I think about what will go in the farm. I do little sketches, not using any reference:

chickens, pigs, sheep. I don't use any references, because I don't care about realism. This is a farm in the brain; it doesn't have to be realistic. I put these sketches up on a drawing board, and arranging them helps me visualize the final composition. Another thing I do with the vellum is cut a piece into the shape of a brain and lay it on the canvas. It wasn't big enough at first so I added another piece behind it. That will be the lizard brain. Then I didn't like the front, so I ripped it and expanded it outward. All this helps me visualize the finished piece. The plan is to make full-size sketches of the general forms and arrange these smaller pieces onto that sketch, which will then be transferred onto the painting.

Now I know what I'll do with the frame. I'm going to decoupage some sketches onto it, to keep thinking about this inside/outside idea. I've been thinking about the farm machines my granddad had. When I was a kid, my family went to live on his farm for a while when my dad was out of work. My grandfather took me and my little sister on walks. I think he had 100 acres. And he had all these farm machines rusted solid in the field, beautiful things, huge. It was this industrial machinery, but it was totally useless. I was amazed. I loved it. It was fun to climb on. And as I got older, I can't help but think of that machinery from time to time. It strikes me: You try to create some utopian way of doing things, and it winds up as garbage sitting out forever. In civilization there are so many things we're able to do, but can we clean up the mess it makes? Why can't we take care of the things we have? I think of the plumbing, the roads, all the infrastructure in this country is crumbling and it's just like that farm machinery.

So I have the image in my mind of the farm machines, and the amazing thing is nowadays I can go online and look up "vintage farm machinery," and sure enough, I find them: combine harvester, hay-bailer, other ones whose names I don't know. And I draw them. This is the first time I've used images online to work on my artwork. In the past I have used printouts as reference every now and then, but the internet makes it so easy now. In the past this would have taken many hours at the library, and many intermediate sketches. As I continue working out the machinery, I refer

to a book I have, *How Things Work.* I've always loved this book. It has all kinds of diagrams of gears and pulleys, and I page through it for a while to get a sense of these machines. I want my farm machines to have a mechanistic impression, just to give a general feeling. As I page through, I'm constantly thinking: *How can I make this part of what I'm doing?*

Now that all the elements are in place, it's just bringing everything together. I feel rushed, like my subconscious is eager to get onto other things, but this takes time. A few days later I'm ready to gesso the canvas. I'm going to use multiple colors to contrast the different elements of the image—the brain, the farm, the background. To transfer the sketches to the canvas, I make stencils out of them using ripped paper, and I paint over these. I realize I want to make another painting, one of just the farm, so I reuse these stencils on a second canvas. As for the paint, I use the same paint that I've mixed for other pieces I'm working on; as always I'm doing several simultaneously. Next I rough in the brain and the face in gesso, and it reminds me of Bob Dylan's album where he's got that afro hairdo. I'll need to keep working out the details of these things as I progress, but I'm happy for now. I decide I need a foreground element to break up the reddish color, so I paint in a daffodil over where my face will be. I go on the computer and pull up an image, and I do a two-minute painting of it. Now I feel this painting has reached the top of a hill. It was hard to get here, but now I can see how things are. My vision of the finished piece is much clearer. Finally having paint on the canvases makes me feel like they're almost done.

In subsequent sessions I add darker colors for detail. I'm working on my self-portrait and the farm painting simultaneously. When I need to figure out how one of the farm elements should look, I work it out on the farm painting first and then do it on the self-portrait. Next is an orange-yellow, which is so bright that it needs to be used sparingly. As I paint, I wonder how far I should go, pushing against some invisible borders. But I go beyond that border, and I feel it, and the yellow is like a path that goes out in all directions from my brain, connecting the internal and external, even onto the frame.
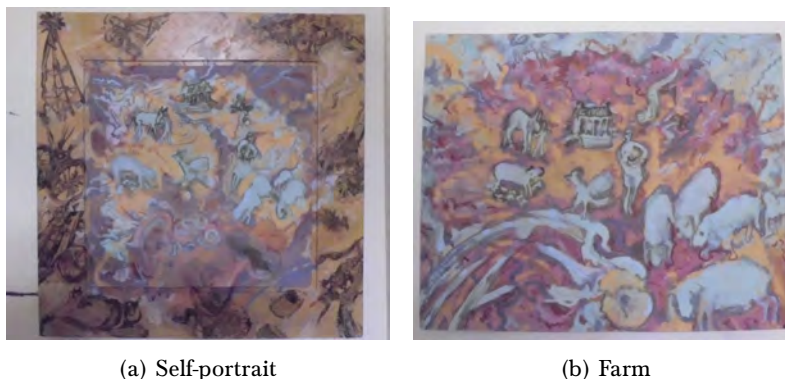
(a) Self-portrait (b) Farm

Figure A.4: Jeannie's "conjoined" paintings: a farm and her self-portrait

Then I meet one weekend with a discussion group on motion, and we're talking about the inner ear and its role in balance. That gets me thinking. All my life had motion sickness. And my imbalance is visible in the painting, with my tilted head, and how the ear is right there in the center. I look up photos of the inner ear to do a sketch, and then I draw my own ear in the mirror. I use a blue-gray paint that I mixed for another piece. I feel great about this, letting the inner ear coming into focus and leaving the brain blurrier, because I realize that carsickness and motion sickness has been such a driving force in my life. I think it was why I hated grade school (when I had to take the bus) and excelled in high school (when I could walk), and I even think it's why I'm an atheist (because we drove to church on Sundays, sometimes twice, often followed by a Sunday afternoon drive).

The blue-gray is such a great color, but I don't want to overdo it. I prefer to not put too much paint on there—I always want it to be perfect the first time, a nice crisp line, rather than trying to fix it. Fixing it always ruins it. In the end, I think I do overdo it a bit. Part of the problem is my brush, which I'm not satisfied with because it's long and floppy and I'd rather have a stiffer, more precise brush. I go to my farm painting and try to put some of the blue on there. I get two lines in and it stops me. I just can't continue. I need to put it aside for a while. I know I like the blue on there but I don't know how to use it yet.

In the following days, I resolve the blue and move on to some pink. At some point I decide to stop working on the farm painting. "This is all too much for me," I tell myself. But once I mix up the blue, I find myself thinking, "Yeah, the farm needs some blue, too." So I bring that canvas back out and put some blue on it. They're kind of a conjoined pair, so what can I do?

Amidst this, we have a terrible plumbing disaster in my house. Things are a mess right now, but I have time to paint because this and that has to be settled on the house before I can continue fixing the bathrooms. Beyond just this, my summer hasn't turned out as I'd hoped. It's been very stressful, not a happy time. So I see in my painting a little of myself as this person in the world. Though it's not as angry as this other piece I'm working on now, which is kind of a raging feminist thing. Interactions in the world, they just have been wearing me down.

Another day, I work on the painting four little times. Purple for an hour and a half, and then pink a few other times. What I'm doing is trying to create a path for the eye, to keep the eye moving, and if the eye ever gets caught somewhere, it needs something. It takes letting time pass. At 1:30 in the morning, when I am supposed to be doing something else, I sneak back in and put on a tiny daub of pink paint, and now the thing is finished.

A.6 JUSTIN

I've been thinking about this project for the past few months, figuring out how I want to represent myself. I made a number of self-portraits in my 20s, especially when I was drawing more, but this will be the first I've done in 5 years. You know, I think I look the same.

I made a number of sketches, but it took a while before I was happy with the composition. This piece will be a stained glass window, and the composition needs to be exact, a perfect snowflake image. If the panels are off, it feels crooked. The balance isn't right—that's not what I want. By July I'm at a point where I can physically start working on it.

Poetic Display A.6 Justin's self-portraiture experience

I spend months thinking about
snowflakes and kaleidoscopes
before I can finally get to work.

From a photo and a mirror, I draw my face
four times to get it right.
From my drawing I paint my face on glass
four times to get it right.
My face on the circular centerpiece, fired
four times to get it right.

I choose the colors and cut the glass
like an old European craftsman:
Glittering, two hundred tiny magical pieces.

Working on a piece like this is
something like climbing a mountain.
In this case I actually did climb a mountain
In Colorado during the eclipse
so now I know I can do it:
Make the me I see in my mind.

With this energy I bring together
the glass with the lead,
I come together.

The failed attempts, too,
broken in the kiln, they're part of it,
part of me, the selves within myself.

I'm going for a kaleidoscopic effect, something psychedelic, which is my style. There will be a central image of myself with others coming outward and blending into the colored sections. I want a kaleidoscopic view of myself that contains different depictions of myself, which are different facets of my personality.

I have a reference photo, taken by a photographer friend of mine. I'm also thinking about other photos taken recently by a different photographer. Those turned out really well, and even though I'm not directly referencing them, they helped solidify the sense of style I want to have in this project. I start out doing a thorough sketch of that photo in pencil on paper. I do this three or four times. Getting the likeness is a struggle. I want to make sure I come across as myself. Not just in that it looks like me, but also in that it was made by me. Eventually I get something I'm happy with. It was an interesting day because I was staring at myself for roughly four hours.

Next I begin selecting the glass and cutting the pieces to shape. I arrange the glass to be cut and I pick the colors. I have a range of glass salvaged from local churches (which is part of my day job) and found in the street. I start off with my glass-cutting tools: a wheel, a stone and pliers. These are the traditional tools, and they haven't changed much in a thousand years—including the glass itself. I have great honor for the antique glass I'm using and these traditional techniques. And, importantly, I'm comfortable with these tools; they're like part of me.

With the first pieces of glass selected, the actual painting of myself begins. I use vitreous paint, fine brushes, a little bit of water and some paper towels. It's hard, again, to capture my likeness. I ask my son and my wife, and they say, "No, that's not the right one." Once you lay down the paint you can't really change it, so if you aren't satisfied you have to start over. Over the next few days, I go through four separate attempts. Anyone who comes to visit my studio, I ask for feedback. Usually it's not good. But I keep at it, and I even fire the unsuccessful pieces because I want to use them somehow. Some of them break in the kiln.

Finally I come up with something I'm pleased with, an image of me on a round piece of glass. I'm nervous the whole time until it's fired. There are just so many

points where things can go wrong. Even after it's fired, there are the decisions of color. In the end I decide to add some flesh tone to it, which will give it a little more depth. But if I mess that up, in painting or firing, it could ruin the whole piece. But it goes fine: It takes three or four firings to get the color and background, and I'm completely happy with it. The week of doubt and failure makes this happiness even stronger.

By now I have a concrete composition in mind. The round image of myself will be in the center, with a spectrum around it. I decide to include some magical symbols in the outer rim, very small, because this is something I've been getting into lately. I make a number of pieces using traditional symbology: occult earth symbols, astrological signs, planetary signs. It's my effort to include some personal meaning in the piece, to make it more esoteric and psychedelic. I paint a lot more than I use; I just choose by feeling. I use my birth sign, the elements earth, wind, fire. There's temple, moon, altar…I'm looking forward to learning more and using it in my art in the future. I post a photo of these little symbols on Instagram.

At this point I take a trip to Colorado for the solar eclipse on August 21. I wanted to bear witness to it in a totality section. It was a profound experience. What went along with it was a three-day backpacking trip in the mountains, which I've been preparing for. I summited Mt. Vermillion, one of the Centennial Peaks, which was 13,000 feet. So I physically prepared and then accomplished it. That physical feat was a gut-check for me, a time to think about the man I am today, at 38, and my capabilities as an artist, as a father, as a husband and person. It solidified the confidence I'm feeling in working on this self-portrait—the confidence to trust my instincts, to do things my way. Before, I was concerned about how other people would look at it and see me as, but once that trip happened, that went away. Both the trip and this project have already been pivotal in the way I see myself.

Back in Philadelphia, I have the energy to really make headway on the piece. The painting is done, and now I'm constructing the stained glass window. I work standing up in my studio, and the lightbox is on with glass pieces strewn about, and I'm picking and choosing the colors as they match what I have in my mind.

There are about 200 small pieces that I need to wrap in lead and put together, much like a puzzle. I use a glazing knife to build the glass and lead together, every intersection. I'm using so many pieces because I wanted to show my skill. I wanted to do something that even a person with experience would have a difficult time doing it. I've been doing this for 18 years, so I can build intricate, difficult pieces with relative ease. Of course problems come up, but I can solve my way out. The earlier paintings of myself have been incorporated into the work. They're in pieces,

Figure A.5: Justin's self-portrait getting assembled

smaller aspects of myself contained within the scope of the window. To me, that symbolizes the different aspects of myself, how I think I am versus how others see me, how I want to be perceived.

As I assemble the window, the concept and actual execution come together. Since my trip, I have a lot of energy and momentum. After working so slowly for so long, now I finish the piece within a week. It's a milestone for me as an artist, to be successful in my own style in a piece that is entirely my own—of me, and in my style, both recognizable. It turned out way better than I thought. I take a photo with light coming through, and then I take a look through some of my home-made mirror kaleidoscopes and take some photos of that. I post one on Instagram. I just have this great self-esteem; it's still twinkling.

A.7 TAMMY

I've been so busy for the past several months that I haven't done any art at all. When I agreed to do this project, I didn't anticipate that. And now it's past due and I haven't managed to start yet—and the pressure is on. Most of my work is abstract and non-representational. I'm not good at people, especially faces, but I've challenged myself

Poetic Display A.7 Tammy's self-portraiture experience

It figures that as soon as I agree to make my first self-portrait I get so busy that I can't
make any art for months, I hate it, I'm sorry.

But I finally have time, and so it's time.
I stand in a sunbeam and warm up: I let the
Colors flow.

Instagram inspiration doesn't seem to help.
I'm out of practice, I'm stressed out. But
I try again (and again).

I measure my favorite photo of myself and
Put on music and sharpen my pencil and then
I disappear for a while.

When I get back I've finally done it:
Made something I don't immediately hate.
I take a photo of it.

Time for a beer. I look at that photo
Many times, taking notes. Then the next day
I fix what needs fixing.

And in the end I don't feel transformed like
I thought I would. But I have my first
Self-portrait and I'm happy,

And I kind of want to do it again.

to try. I've agreed to do this, and I'm determined to follow through—for Tim as much as for myself.

Finally some time opens up for me. I'm housesitting for a friend whose house is big and quiet and has lovely natural light. I stand at the bartop counter separating the living room from the kitchen. I hunch a bit because it's low. Here I attempt my self-portrait.

Getting back into art mode, I do some flow pieces—my name for the kind of abstract art I make, where I just go with the flow. Suddenly I see that one of them looks like a face. I decide to make my self-portrait that way, but when I consciously try, it doesn't work.

Scrapping that idea, I try my hand at drawing. On Instagram I pull up some posts I saved. I follow a portraitist I like, and I study some of her posts: her finished portraits, sketchbook pages of lips, progress shots. I look at another artist's visual guide to facial proportions. Referring to these materials, I draw myself in pen (it turns out awful) and then paint myself in watercolor (worse). I'm frustrated because I'm determined to make something that is recognizable as me. And these people on Instagram are so good.

I realize that I've been working so far without looking at a mirror or even a photo. I think that's the problem. I pull up my best photo of myself: a good hair day, nice lighting. It's funny—sometimes I don't think it looks like me, but I use this photo for everything.

With Beck's new album on, I give this one a try. I'm drawing in pencil on cold-press watercolor paper, measuring proportions and doing the math to get the drawing right. I do little sketches on post-it notes to get the composition right. Focus. Suddenly *Colors* is over, and so I put on some podcasts. Eventually I switch to reality television—things I don't need to actually look at. My neck is sore from looking down, but I only notice it when I stop.

I reach a stopping point. I feel really accomplished. I'm glad that I'm finally having time to dedicate to this project because it was something that I was very enthusiastic about at first and then was disappointed I never got to do it. Had my schedule allowed, I would have liked to spend nine months working on a piece. I'm going to have a beer tonight and then decide if I'll add color to this or leave it as pencil. I think I'll work on some other art tonight, too, just because I'm feeling so energized. I post the in-progress photo on Instagram and also text it to a friend.
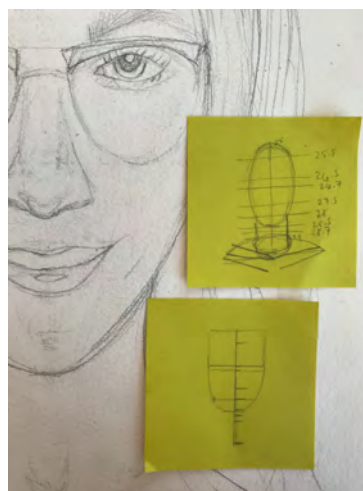
Figure A.6: Tammy's self-portrait with post-it notes

That night I look at the portrait several times, thinking about it. I take a photo of it with my phone, and looking at that image, I see the different parts that need to be fixed: my forehead, my chin, one side of my glasses…

In the morning I go to the store, and it hits me how strange it is that I've never done a self-portrait before. I've taken art classes, but somehow I've avoided it. On purpose, maybe, because I can't stand the thought of staring at myself for so long. But somehow, luckily, I didn't really think of it as me when I was really focused on drawing. It was just like drawing anything.

The next day I work on the portrait again. It's a very warm day for October, so the window is open. I can hear the birds' music and feel a breeze every now and then. I stand in a nice sunbeam and I draw. I'm fixing things and adding details, like my moles. My neck doesn't bother me today. As I work, I refer from to progress photos of the piece from yesterday, to remind me how things were before I fixed them. Sometimes I see I've made things worse, so that helps me fix them better. While I draw it hits me that in my drawing I look like I'm in my 20s. But that's okay. I'm happy that I'm having a pretty easy time seeing where the mistakes are and knowing

how to fix them. Two years ago, when I was doing a face a day, I didn't have an easy time at all.

It also strikes me that when I'm really focused, I don't think or feel anything. It's like my brain is just turned off, which is really something because I feel like my brain is always going. As a result I am worried I won't contribute anything to Tim's project because I think he's looking for strong emotional experiences, like transformative thoughts of self. At one point an emotion does hit me and I think, "This will be great for the interview," but when it's time for the interview I can't remember what it was. I rack my brain for a while, and I just get more and more frustrated. Finally something happened and I can't remember it.

Soon enough, I hit a point where it's done. I originally thought I'd add color and perhaps collage elements, but I've decided to keep it as pencil. Leave well enough alone. If I try adding color I might just get frustrated and want to start over and there's not time for that anymore.

I sit on the couch and read for a while, and I'm happy. It's a really big accomplishment. This project has made me really want to dive in with faces—though maybe not my own—because I am feeling re-inspired and energized. It's funny to get inspired by a self-portrait when I never wanted to do one before.

APPENDIX B   MY OWN SELF-PORTRAIT

As I discussed in §3.7, researcher reflexivity is an enriching (perhaps even necessary) aspect of interpretivist research. It has been suggested that an element of self-study can contribute to researcher reflexivity (Mitchell et al., 2011). Pithouse (2011) argues that art-making is a particularly fruitful form of self-study. The reflexivity furnished by drawing can strengthen a researcher's understanding of the phenomenon of interest, of their methods and of themselves, and it can also foster empathy and a shared sense of purpose with the participants (Pithouse, 2011). Given my study's interest in self-portraiture, there was an opportunity for self-study through the creation of my own self-portrait. Here I present the narrative resulting from an analysis of my own experience of self-portraiture, along with annotations and a poetic display.

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It's time to get started. I am going to make a self-portrait. It will be the first piece of art I've done in months.

I start by thinking about all the self-portraits I've done in my life. The first one I remember doing was in colored pencil, in middle school. Since then I've done self-portraits in graphite, acrylic, oil, crayon and watercolor. Most of them were art class assignments in high school. I picture them in turn, considering all sorts of things: their compositions, how pleased I was with them, where they are now, how I improved through and since doing them...For this new one, I want to do something different from what I've done before, at least compositionally. I've decided already that I want to do this new piece in crayon. Crayola. It's a medium I enjoyed working with in high school but haven't touched since my senior year. To me, its vividness is unparalleled. And it's cheap. Moreover, I have a piece of paper I found in my closet that can be put to work—this way, I don't need to buy any supplies, as money is always a concern these days. The only thing I'm missing is Turpenoid, my favored brand of paint thinner. I

Poetic Display B.1 My self-portraiture experience

At 27 I'm finally back to
Crayola crayons

I'm going to draw:
    a mirror my computer screen me

I see myself
Ghostly yellow
In my dreams with my
Nose all wrong

Or is it all wrong in real life too?

Podcasts books music thoughts
Am I unfocused or
Is it just that drawing is
Not really different from living?

It's scary to make it darker
going in with those purples and browns

Scary like driving in a blizzard
    like writing a dissertation

Maybe that's why
I end up making it brighter
A streak of yellow on my face

There is light here after all

used to have a huge canister of it, but I must have discarded it in one of my moves. No matter—I'll do without. I'm trying to do this on a shoestring.

But what to draw? Well, *me*, of course, but that's not all that precise. And how? For inspiration I turn to my Pinterest account, where I've put my personal library of art. I don't consider myself an active user of Pinterest, but I like the interface, and I use it as a personal (albeit public) portal. There are hundreds of items here, and scrolling down brings up memories of visits to museums and websites all around the world from the past ten years or so. I'm looking for compositions, chiefly. Would I paint just my face? My whole body? What would I be doing? What else would be in the picture? It's exhilarating—so many possibilities—but overwhelming, too. As I scroll, my eyes are drawn to the self-portraits. There are more in there than I remembered. I keep coming back to a self-portrait from a few years ago by Oliver Scarlin, an artist about my age. Looking at it, I get the sense that its composition is what I had in mind when I was picturing my own self-portrait. Granted, it's fairly generic: shoulders and face, rendered realistically, with a plain background. But mine will have a white background.

Will I draw from life, or from a photograph? When I do these sorts of things, I typically draw from photographs. Life is for sketching, I think; photographs are for drawing. But I sold my digital camera a year ago, so if I'm going to do a photograph, I'll need to take it with my iPhone. I decide to try it. It's a challenge because I want to use the rear camera, which is better but means I won't be able to see what I'm doing. But I'm used to taking time-release photos, and I know it'll be a process to get it right. While I'm posing for the camera, I am thinking about the finished piece and how I want it to look. I have in mind a certain pose, a certain attitude, but it's challenging to put that into words or even bodily form. I think about three angles: of my body to the camera, of my head to the camera, and of my eyes to the camera. Each of these angles is slightly different. I nod my head slightly. After a few tries I'm satisfied with the photo I have. I transfer it to my computer. Then, before I put my phone down, I select a podcast to play while I work. I perform a lens correction in
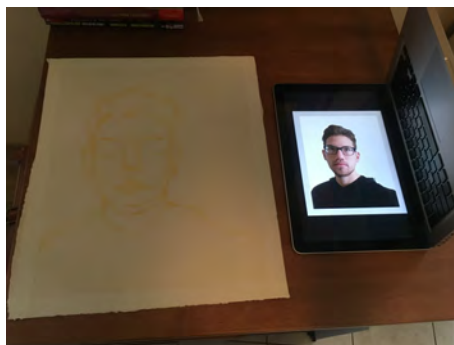
Figure B.1: My self-portrait, with reference photo, after Session One

Photoshop to make up for the too-wide angle of my cell phone camera lens. Next I erase the background of the photo. I measure the piece of paper I have, and I crop the photo in Photoshop to match. I use one-inch tape to mask a border on the paper, and I do the same thing to the photo on the computer.

Now it's time for the hard work. I lay my laptop screen flat on the table alongside the piece of paper, and I attempt to recreate on the paper the forms I see on the screen. I use a yellow colored pencil—ochre, I remember it's called—because that's how I was taught. If I screw up, it won't be that visible. Ochre is risk management. It's been a long time since I've drawn, and I'm not entirely confident in my draftsmanship, so I do calculations to help myself: The image on my computer screen is 2.36 times smaller than the paper, so with a ruler I measure key landmarks on the screen, such as how far the top of my hair is from the top of the screen, and calculate where they should be on the paper. It's more difficult than it used to be, and it's taking a long time. I have other things to do, so I wish I could do this faster. I keep messing up, putting lines in the wrong places. But little by little it comes together. Now that I'm looking at a ghostly yellow, slightly demented version of myself, it's time to stop for the day. Frustration notwithstanding, I am energized, and I take this momentum with me into the day's other tasks.

Sometime in the middle of the night, either in a dream or in one of those interstices

of awakening that might as well be a dream, I realize that my nose is too far to the right. Mid-afternoon the next day, when it is time to work on my self-portrait, I realize this is, indeed, the case. I need to move it over a bit. I set up my workstation with my computer sitting on its screen alongside the paper, as I did yesterday, and I put on an audiobook to accompany my work—cosmologist Sean Carroll's *The Big Picture.* I fish my crayons out of the closet and go in with darker colors—oranges, browns. I am nervous because this is where I really have to commit. Even though I fixed the nose, there's something about my picture that doesn't match the photo. My draftsmanship skills are out of practice. Even so, somehow, it looks like me. As I darken—now blues, purples, greens—I try to improve the resemblance even more.

I discover now that my right eye is in the wrong place. Somehow I didn't notice it all this time, but now that I do, it's a glaring problem. That's the biggest problem with the picture. Normally I would use some Turpenoid to erase the crayon, but I don't have any. I'll have to fix this another way. Gouache—I'll paint over it. I rummage through the closet looking for my paints, but I can't find them. Did I get rid of them? I vaguely remember doing so. Or maybe I lost them. But I find a razor blade, which is just as good: Rather than adding, I'll take away. I cut away my eye and reveal the white beneath. I redraw my eye and—blast it!—it's too big. I don't think I can take off anymore paper without putting a hole through it. I'll just have to make it work. How discouraging: I'm doing this as part of my dissertation, and I don't want to do it badly. Tomorrow I'm going to buy some Turpenoid after all. And anyway, it'll mean I can blend the colors more, and it'll be a better product.

As I'm working, mixing colors in layer after layer, I think about things my art teachers used to say, like how you should never use black because it's not a natural color, and instead you should mix black. They used to take away our blacks. I see my black crayon in the box, but I don't consider using it. I don't need it. I realize now that my tools are stories: The things I'm using are themselves old—I bought these crayons, a Crayola box of 64—back in high school, and using them I am brought back to the other times I used them, the other pieces I made with them.

Figure B.2: My self-portrait after Session Two

Working today is like driving in a snowstorm. I know where I'm going, but I can't always see the road very clearly. Still, I know the way and how to drive, and I'm confident I can get there—eventually. As the drawing takes shape, it starts to get more fun. I'm definitely better at doing colors and modeling than doing the drawing itself. After working for about an hour, I've had enough. I feel a bit on edge, but I'm hoping that, once I have the Turpenoid, I'll be able to do a much better job of it.

A short session—around ten minutes. The previous sessions were an hour. I have Turpenoid now, and I pour some in a small dish and work with a flat-tipped brush. Scrubbing, I am able to erase my right eye. This makes me happy. I work on blending the rest. I get the idea to blend the dark parts and keep the light parts dry, for a nice effect. It'll give the picture an ethereal, sort of windswept feeling. I think of the work of Audrey Kawasaki, which is mystical and opalescent in that way. Mysterious. It occurs to me now that I was wrong yesterday: I thought I knew how the picture was going to turn out, but that's not the case. There's not a single, clear destination; rather, the destination is changing based on the direction I'm heading.

I set up my workstation and get to work once again. I continue to reference the

Figure B.3: My self-portrait after Session Three

photograph, but it's clear now that what I'm doing is not making an exact duplicate of it. Rather, I'm doing translation work: The photo itself works as a system of different color and shape relations. The picture I'm making won't be the same system, but it will be an analogous one. The more accurately analogous it is, the better it will work. I begin by darkening my sweater with oranges and purples. Then I apply with a layer of Turpenoid to smooth out the colors once again. Now I focus on enriching the colors of my face, trying to get the shading right. Layer by layer. I am pleased with how the colors interact; they feel iridescent. It's not what I had in mind at first, and it's not very much like Audrey Kawasaki at all, but I do like it.

I am still listening to *The Big Picture*; the author is describing quantum theory, particularly the notion of universes in superposition and how they split upon observation. I think that's a useful way to think about drawing, too: There are infinite possible end states for a picture, and they eventually narrow into one. Along the way, each stroke of the crayon closes some doors and opens new ones, and so the picture is constantly evolving in a space of possibilities. And we are spaces of possibility, too: There's

always something unknown. I notice that half of my face is dark and the other half light, and I realize that this is a good visual metaphor for this concept, so I decide to push the contrast. I go in with Turpenoid again to de-clarify the dark half, like how your vision gets blurrier at night. I have to stop now, because the Turpenoid needs time to dry. I've been working for more than an hour—it felt shorter.

I am updating the operating system on my computer, so I don't have access to my reference photograph. It's okay, I think, because at this point I am just making the picture work on its own. The translation work is over. I start out by lightening my face with yellows and oranges. Doing this, I notice that there's a sliver of light at the edge of the dark half of my face, at the rightmost edge. I like that. I want people to notice it, so I exaggerate it with a heavy-handed yellow streak. We don't normally think of there being light in the darkness, but there it is. Maybe that's another good metaphor. Next I go in to darken my sweater. It's a flat shading process, for the most part. I even use black, and I think about the audacity of Edouard Manet while I'm doing it. In the 19th century, he used black against the rules, too. It's mechanical work, but I'm not listening to a podcast or book today; I'm ruminating. I'm thinking about the dissertation process, about a paper that got accepted yesterday afternoon, about ways of knowing, about my life choices—doors opening and closing as I move through the world. When the sweater is dark enough, I sweep it over with Turpenoid again and then use a balled-up piece of paper towel to burnish it.

At this point I decide to take a photo of the picture and my crayons and post it on Facebook with the caption: "Working on my dissertation." I laugh because now I'm blurring the line between self-portraits and selfies. Seeing the picture in reproduction, I decide my hair should be darker, so I go in with a few strokes of crayon, but then I change my mind. It's fine how it is.

It's almost done. The last thing I need to do is scratch in some highlights in my beard and hair, and along my glasses. I decide not to use the razor blade I used the other day because it's too blunt, too unpredictable. I wish I had an X-Acto knife—I used to, but I can't find it. In my toolbox, however, I find a pointy metal tool. I don't

Figure B.4: My finished self-portrait

know what it is or where it came from, but it'll do the trick. I make a few scratches. And then I stop. It's done. All of a sudden, there's nothing left to do. I take up a crayon one last time to sign my symbol and write on the back, like I usually do: my name, the date, my city. This time I add my age, too, because it seems like the thing to do on a self-portrait.

Looking myself over, I'm quite happy. No, I take that back: I'm embarrassed. It looks like garbage. I am happy I did it—happy I finally "had the time" to make a picture. Really, it was like waking up a part of me that's been asleep for a long time now. And I'm happy I didn't lose all my drawing ability. It doesn't look like me exactly, but it looks like me enough to be recognizable as me. That's a bit strange. There are plenty of places that could have been better. Chiefly draftsmanship. I wish I could draw better. But when will I have time to keep practicing? I should have gone to art school. Well, I think, that ship set sail quite a while ago. Anyway.

I put the picture down and go to *pafa.org*.

APPENDIX C   SESSION PROTOCOL

This protocol was distributed to each participant before they began their self-portrait. At our kickoff meeting, I walked through the protocol with them, making any necessary clarifications. At the conclusion of each art-making session, each participant audio-recorded (or wrote, at their option) their answers to these questions. The participant then sent me the recording, along with any relevant image files (as described at the end of this protocol). The logistics for this transmission were be discussed at our initial meeting. Methodologically, this protocol draws from van Manen (2014), and some of his phrases appear here verbatim (see his p. 314). For most sessions, the protocol took about 9 minutes to complete.

1. Walk me through today's art-making session. Describe what you did as you lived through it. Please avoid generalizations. Describe your experience from inside, like a state of mind. Include your thoughts, feelings, moods and emotions. Focus on particular details. Think about how your body felt, how things smelled and sounded, etc. If you can, use metaphors.

2. Did you encounter any roadblocks in your work today? Describe what happened. How did you go about dealing with them?

3. What tools did you use? Describe them. How did you interact with them? How did they contribute to your artwork?

4. Did you use any reference materials in your work today? Photographs, models, etc. If so, describe them. How did you interact with them? How did they contribute to your artwork?

5. Did you do any sketches while you were working today? If so, describe them. When did you make each one? What did you do with them? How did they contribute to your artwork?

6. Were you doing anything else while you were working on your self-portrait?

7. Did you ever notice the passage of time?

8. How do you feel now? What is on your mind?

Finally, take a photograph of your self-portrait as it is now. Also, please take photographs of any sketches and reference materials you used, as well as of your tools and workspace. Three or four photos should suffice.

Please send these materials to Tim before your next art-making session.

APPENDIX D FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This protocol was used in the follow-up interview, conducted after each participant finished their self-portrait. This is a semi-structured interview, meaning that probing questions were used to dig deeper into participants' responses. Moreover, other specific questions were asked as needed for clarification of empirical material gathered through the Session Protocol (Appendix C). As such, this protocol is illustrative, not exhaustive. Additionally, some of the questions listed below are grouped in a single item, but they were not asked all at once. Rather, one question was asked at a time. The purpose of this interview was to hear the participant's integrated story of the creation of their self-portrait and to uncover the factors and steps that led to its successful completion. Ideally, this interview took place in the space where the self-portrait was made (in practice, this was not always possible) and in the self-portrait's presence. The interview took around 45 minutes to complete on average.

1. Describe your finished self-portrait.

   Prompt: describe specific features in more detail, medium

2. Walk me through the development of the piece.

   Prompt: describe specific processes in more detail, work location

3. What tools did you use? Describe them. How do you use them? What does it feel like when you use them? Do you remember what it felt like the first time you used them? Has it changed?

   Prompt: other tool options, why these tools

4. What did doing this piece mean to you?

   Prompt: reminded you of, made you think, made you feel

5. What does the piece itself mean to you?

   Prompt: reminds you of, makes you think, makes you feel

6. Is this your first self-portrait? If not, tell me about others that you've done. What do you think of doing self-portraits? How is it similar to or different from doing other kinds of works?

   Prompt: success factors, risks taken, learning experience

   Prompt: other experience/personal history as an artist

7. How did taking part in this research affect your work?

APPENDIX E   EVALUATING PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH

These guidelines are offered by Max van Manen (2014) for evaluating research in phenomenology of practice. This text is reproduced verbatim from his pp. 355–356.

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How to appraise a phenomenological study? We need to ask, "Does the text show reflective allusions and surprising insights? What depthful insights have been gained through this study?" Depth is what gives the phenomenon or lived experience to which we orient ourselves its meaning and its resistance to our fuller understanding. As Merleau–Ponty expressed it: Depth is the means the things have to remain distinct, to remain things, while not being what I look at at present. It is because of depth that the things have a resistance, which is precisely their reality (1968, p. 219).

A certain openness is required in the writing and reading of a phenomenological text, and the measure of the openness needed to grasp and express something is also a measure of its depthful nature. Rich descriptions that explore the meaning structures beyond what is immediately experienced gain a dimension of depth. Gabriel Marcel (1950) discusses the notion of depth in reference to the idea of the secret, of what is beyond the ordinary, this dazzling yonder. What do we mean when we talk of a deep thought or a profound notion? We should not confuse depth with the unusual, the strange, or the odd:

> A profound notion is not merely an unaccustomed notion, especially not so if we mean by unaccustomed simply odd. There are a thousand paradoxes that have this unaccustomed quality, and that lack any kind of depth; they spring up from a shallow soil and soon whither away. I would say that a thought is felt to be deep, or a notion to be profound, if it debouches into a region beyond itself, whose whole vastness is more than the eye can grasp. (Marcel, 1950, p. 192)

A high-quality phenomenological text cannot be summarized. It does not need to contain a list of findings—rather, one must evaluate it by meeting with it, going

through it, encountering it, suffering it, consuming it, and, as well, being consumed by it. Selected criteria to evaluate the phenomenological quality of a study are the following: heuristic questioning, descriptive richness, interpretive depth, distinctive rigor, strong and addressive meaning, experiential awakening, and inceptual epiphany.

Heuristic Questioning Does the text induce a sense of contemplative wonder and questioning attentiveness—ti estin (the wonder what this is) and hoti estin (the wonder that something exists at all)?

Descriptive richness Does the text contain rich and recognizable experiential material?

Interpretive Depth Does the text offer reflective insights that go beyond the taken-for-granted understandings of everyday life?

Distinctive Rigor Does the text remain constantly guided by a self-critical question of distinct meaning of the phenomenon or event?

Strong and Addressive Meaning Does the text "speak" to and address our sense of embodied meaning?

Experiential Awakening Does the text awaken prereflective or primal experience through vocative and presentative language?

Inceptual Epiphany Does the study offer us the possibility of deeper and original insight, and perhaps, an intuitive or inspirited grasp of the ethics and ethos of life commitments and practices?

Vita

Timothy John Gorichanaz was born in Wisconsin in October 1989. He attended Marquette University (BA, 2011), University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (TESOL Certificate, 2012) and New York University (MA, 2013) before coming to Drexel University. While at Drexel, Tim published several research articles in the areas of information and document experience and the philosophy of information. Some of this work was broadly conceptual, and some explored particular domains, including ultramarathon running, religious practice and art-making.

For his work, Tim received several honors. In addition to scholarships and awards from the College of Computing & Informatics and the Office of International Programs, Tim received the Innovation Award from the Special Interest Group for Information Needs, Seeking and Use of the Association for Information Science and Technology (2016), as well as the Litwin Books Award for Ongoing Dissertation Research in the Philosophy of Information (2017). He was also selected as an alternate for the 2016–17 Fulbright–Schuman Research Student Fellowship. Additionally, his paper "Document Phenomenology," coauthored with K. F. Latham, was selected as the Outstanding Paper of *Journal of Documentation* for 2016.

In his time at Drexel, Tim served as a research assistant to Drs. Deborah Turner and Collette Sosnowy and a teaching assistant to Drs. Deborah Turner and Jane Greenberg. As instructor of record, he taught Information Ethics and Social Aspects of Information Systems in the 2017–18 academic year.