



SEMINAR SERIES

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY

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Canvas to Community: The Power of Empathy in Art Education, Sustainability, and Contemporary Art

Dr. Victoria Pavlou | Frederick University, Cyprus

Dr. Raphael Vella | University of Malta, Malta

Host | Dr. Rita Irwin

▶ **Friday, April 26, 2024** | 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. (PST) | Via Zoom

* for zoom details, please email edcp.educ@ubc.ca

How can art education help us make sense of global issues that are so massive that they seemingly exist beyond human comprehension? Ecologist and philosopher Timothy Morton (2013) has referred to these vast issues as “hyperobjects” – problems of such magnitude that they defy explanation and make people feel powerless. Art and art education provide ways of engaging with the potential bleak feeling caused by losing control of things we previously thought we had mastered. Art articulates ideas non-verbally, exposes us to diverse perspectives and can foster empathy and a sense of community. In this presentation, examples of contemporary art and European-funded research projects will be shown to address the potentiality of art and empathy in the face of global issues affecting people’s lives today.

Dr Victoria Pavlou is a Professor of Visual Arts Education at the Education Department of Frederick University, Cyprus. Her teaching and research focus on the initial and continuous professional development of generalist teachers in art education and children’s learning preferences, motivation and creative potential as well as on the synergies of art education and education for sustainable development. Her professional passions include changing attitudes, building confidence and connecting art with real-life issues. She has experience in numerous European-funded projects as a partner and/or external evaluator. She was the coordinator of the CARE (Visual art education in new times: Connecting Art with REal life issues, 2019-2022) project and currently, she coordinates the CARE/SS (Critical ARts Education for Sustainable Societies, 2022-2024) European-funded project. She is a member of the International Society of Education through Art (serving for several years in the European Regional Council - elected and co-opted), a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Education through Art (IJETA) and a guest co-editor of the first 2023 IJETA issue, that focuses on ‘Art, Sustainability and Partnerships’. Together with Professor Raphael Vella, she co-edited the book ‘Art, Sustainability and learning communities. A call to action’ which is expected to be published in February 2024.

Dr. Raphael Vella is a professor of art education at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. Apart from coordinating postgraduate degrees in art education and social practice arts and critical education, he is involved in research projects related to sustainability and art, the impact of socially engaged arts, and arts education in Malta. His research interests include art and art education in the Mediterranean region and issues of identity in contemporary artistic practice and pedagogies. His publications include *Artist-Teachers in Context: International Dialogues* (Sense, 2016), *Art - Ethics - Education*, co-edited with C.-P. Buschkühle and D. Atkinson (2020, Brill/Sense) and *Documents of Socially Engaged Art*, co-edited with M. Sarantou (2021, InSEA). He is also active as an artist and a curator. His artistic work has been shown in many exhibitions in different countries, including Malta, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Argentina, the United States, Canada, Japan and New Zealand.