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# Touching Collage: Examining Haptic Potential in Arts-Based Research Through the Lens of “Lucy’s Picture”

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# Touching Collage: Examining Haptic Potential in Arts-Based Research Through the Lens of “Lucy’s Picture”

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## Highlights

- Collage can be conceptualised broadly, beyond the visual, as a playful and subversive practice.
- Collage can be an embodied process that prioritises touch as a way of knowing and pays particular attention to texture.
- The fragmented and accessible nature of collage renders it a useful vehicle for memory, and a tool for inclusive and intergenerational projects.

## Wichtige Ideen\*

- Man kann Collage breit konzipieren, jenseits von visuellen Verständnissen, als etwas Spielerisches und Subversives.
- Collage kann ein verkörperter Prozess sein, der den Tastsinn aufwertet und besonderen Fokus auf Textur legt.
- Da Collage fragmentiert und leicht zugänglich ist, ist sie ein nützlicher Prozess für das Festhalten von Erinnerungen und für inklusive und generationsübergreifende Projekte.

## Touching Collage: Examining Haptic Potential in Arts-Based Research Through the Lens of “Lucy’s Picture”

Lily Stone\*

### Abstract

#### Keywords

collage, arts-based research, embodiment, touch, haptic

Collage in Arts-Based Research has great potential as a tactile, collaborative process but, in existing research, it is often presented as a predominantly visual medium. Using the children’s book “Lucy’s Picture” (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994) as a framework for my discussion, I examine the untapped haptic potential of collage and the resulting repercussions for ideas of inclusion. In the process, I draw on ten categories that provide fruitful sites for new understandings of collage to emerge and interact: embodiment; a conceptualisation of collage; touch; texture; play; memory; revolt; inclusion; intergenerational communication; and tactile illustration. While I conceptualise collage broadly as a piecing together of fragments in any context, in this article I explore collage as a specifically haptic medium that valorises embodied ways of knowing, rather than making recourse to the false dichotomy of body and mind.

### Zusammenfassung

#### Schlüsselwörter

Collage, Arts-Based Research, Verkörperung, Tastsinn, haptisch

#### German Translation

Lily Stone

Collage in Arts-Based Research hat großes Potenzial als haptischer, kollaborativer Prozess wahrgenommen zu werden, wird in bestehender Forschung allerdings oft als ein visuelles Medium betrachtet. Ich nutze das Kinderbuch „Lucy’s Picture“ (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994) als Grundlage für meine Diskussion, um die ungenutzten haptischen Möglichkeiten von Collage und die daraus resultierenden Folgen für Inklusion zu behandeln. Dabei diskutiere ich zehn Kategorien, die nützlich sind, ein neues Verständnis von Collage zu entwickeln: Verkörperung; eine Konzeptualisierung von Collage; Tastsinn; Textur; Spielen; Erinnerung; Aufstand; Inklusion; generationenübergreifende Kommunikation; und tastbare Illustration. Obwohl ich den Begriff Collage breit auffasse, als das Zusammenfügen von Fragmenten in jeglichem Kontext, untersuche ich Collage in diesem Artikel als ein besonders haptisches Medium, das verkörperte Epistemologie aufwertet, statt eine willkürliche Linie zwischen Körper und Geist zu zeichnen.

## Introduction

“My Grandpa’s coming to tea today,” said Lucy.

“That’s nice,” said Mrs Kelly. “Now, sit down. We’re all going to do some painting.” (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.2)

I had put “Lucy’s Picture” (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994) to the back of my mind until I went to study at the Institute for Art Education in Leipzig in 2018 and took a module titled ‘Collage and Accident’ in collaboration with the Deutsches Zentrum für barrierefreies Lesen, or dzb lesen (the German Centre for Barrier-free Reading). Our task was to design and make a tactile book for blind and partially sighted children using collage. This experience of piecing together found materials to create a tactile narrative brought back memories of “Lucy’s Picture”, my own favourite picture book as a child (see Figure 1). It follows a girl making a tactile picture for her blind grandfather, and I felt like I was living out some kind of logical continuation of Lucy’s story. This experience of collage at the Institute for Art Education and the dzb lesen encouraged me to explore collage as a potentially inclusive practice for Arts-Based Research. It seems that many conceptualisations of collage in Arts-Based Research are heavily grounded in the visual. Surprised by what seems like an oversight of haptic, textural potential, I decided to interrogate collage in this context, examining its importance as an embodied process that engages the sense of touch in the task of creating and recovering knowledge and memory. In this article, I explore haptic potential in collage and how it has been understood and valorised in other contexts, from which Arts-Based Research could learn. I splinter my writing with Nicola Moon’s text from “Lucy’s Picture”, using it as a vehicle for illuminating the important and sometimes unacknowledged facets of collage.

## Embodiment

“Can I do a picture for Grandpa?” asked Lucy.

“Of course you can,” said Mrs Kelly.

Lucy looked at the big sheet of white paper in front of her.

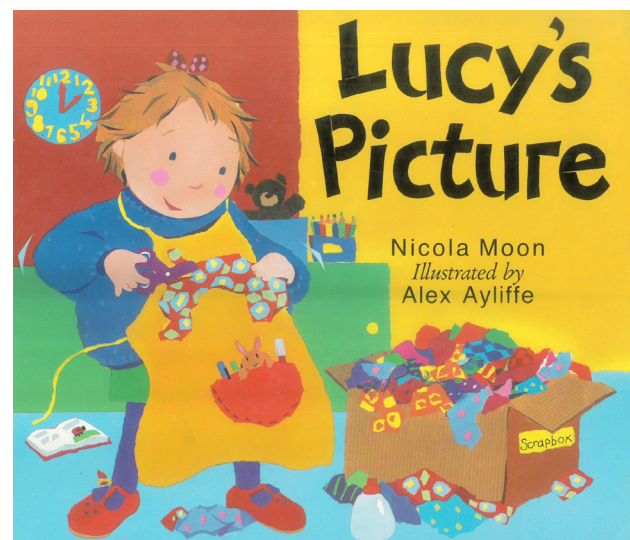
“Can’t you think of what to paint, Lucy?” asked Mrs Kelly.

“What would Grandpa like? Something nice and bright? Look at those lovely colours!” (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.4)

Lucy’s question to her teacher immediately establishes the embodied, active nature of her intentions in making a tactile picture; she will be *doing*. Collage thus acts as a vehicle for her embodied engagement with her surroundings, allowing maker and matter to shape one

another. Jan van Boeckel draws on the work of Juhani Pallasmaa and Tim Ingold to stress the importance of this egalitarian process of engaging with the world, of coming to know it in the process of making and doing (van Boeckel, 2020). In his arts-based workshop, “Metamorphoses of organic forms”, van Boeckel asked his participants to render their imaginings tactile through clay, working together to create a chain of clay organisms by filling in the missing gaps in the evolution of these imaginary creations. In his discussion of the workshop, van Boeckel (2020) hints at the mutual agency of maker and matter.

**Figure 1** Cover image of “Lucy’s Picture”



Note: Images from “Lucy’s Picture” by Nicola Moon and Alex Ayliffe reproduced by permission of Orchard Books, an imprint of Hachette Children’s Group, Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment, London, EC4Y 0DZ. Text from “Lucy’s Picture” by Nicola Moon and Alex Ayliffe reproduced by permission of David Higham Associates, Waverley House, 7-12 Noel Street, London, W1F 8GQ

Eve Sedgwick articulates this exploded binary of subject and object when she claims that “the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity” (2003, p.14). In doing, making, and touching we are already reaching out and making our mark on materials but we are also yielding to the mark they make on us, an idea Maurice Halbwachs (1925/2012) also attaches to our relationship to place. The ambiguous space of negotiation between agency and passivity that such mutually constitutive relationships engender is central to the human experience but is often neglected, as Pallasmaa stresses: “we continue to live in our bodies in the same way that we inhabit our houses, because we have sadly forgotten that we do not live in our bodies but we are ourselves fundamentally embodied constitutions” (2017, p.99). Nevertheless,

a return to the body could risk essentialism or a sentimental attitude towards “traditional societies” (Pallasmaa, 2017, p.101), a description arguably rooted in a nostalgic temporality. Yet, a focus on embodiment also has the potential to open up spaces that cater to bodily experiences as ways of knowing, rather than creating a forced division between body and mind, or becoming so heavily dependent on the visual as a way of extracting and creating knowledge in creative practices.

### A conceptualisation of collage

Lucy looked at the red and yellow and the sky blue paints. “They’re not right,” she said. “Can I use the glue? Can I stick things on to make a picture?”

“You mean a collage? Of course! But you’ll have to sit at another table. There’s not enough room here.” (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.6)

Lucy chooses collage as her inclusive arts practice, much as the Institute for Art Education and the *dzb lesen in Leipzig do*. Nevertheless, collage should not be narrowly conceptualised as simply cutting and sticking paper together, or relegated solely to the realm of the visual, but rather seen as a process of piecing together fragments in any context, from the literal to the conceptual. Rebecca Solnit writes that ‘we collage ourselves into being’ (2020, p.191). While her claim could be seen as metaphorical, as Ulrich Lehmann (2012/2018) stresses is a common philosophical approach to craft, I would argue she is being literal. Solnit is exploring identity and memory in “*Recollections of my Non-Existence*” and collage acts as a vehicle to piece together these unstable categories. This potential for addressing fragmented categories such as identity perhaps explains the implementation of more traditional collage practices in art therapy, both clinically (Homer, 2015; van Schalkwyk, 2010) and as an arts-based approach for interrogating the therapist’s experience (Chilton and Scotti, 2014).

Another factor feeding into the application of collage in therapeutic contexts is what Jorge Lucero describes as its “mereness and ease” (2016, p.6), a quality that means it is not an artistically intimidating practice. Yet, Lucero is writing in the introduction to “*Mere and Easy: Collage as Critical Practice in Pedagogy*”, whose subtitle, “A Collection of Articles from Visual Arts Research”, is telling; as in “Lucy’s Picture”, where Lucy’s final collage (see Figure 2) is presented via a photograph (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994), collage is conceptualised in a limited, visual capacity.

Regardless of this unavoidable focus on the visual, various writers in the collection stress the importance of space, matter and materiality, arguably failing to practice what they preach in the process. For example, writing on how teenagers curate space, Kit Grauer (2016) remains

Figure 2 Image from “Lucy’s Picture”



Note: Images from “Lucy’s Picture” by Nicola Moon and Alex Ayliffe reproduced by permission of Orchard Books, an imprint of Hachette Children’s Group, Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment, London, EC4Y 0DZ. Text from “Lucy’s Picture” by Nicola Moon and Alex Ayliffe reproduced by permission of David Higham Associates, Waverley House, 7-12 Noel Street, London, W1F 8GQ.

reliant on the visual, despite the undeniable importance of an embodied engagement with surroundings in her project. Similarly, both Anniina Suominen Guyas and Kathleen Keys (2016) engage with space in collaged projects and subsequent exhibitions but remain reliant on discourses of the visual, as does Ryan Patton (2016), who, writing on “Art in the Aftermath”, engages with notions of trauma in the visual realm, divorced from the body. The untapped haptic potential in these projects calls for an expansion of the conceptualisation of collage beyond the visual to allow for even more fruitful explorations of collage in Arts-Based Research.

It is interesting that Lucy is relegated to another space in order to make her collage. Due to its reliance on fragments, collage is inherently messy in all media and is characterised by a taking up of space that Stephanie Springgay (2010) references in her writing on pedagogy and touch. Collage is particularly messy in the bitty process of bringing together physical materials: papers, objects, textures and, as a result, it needs its own space to spread and sprawl. It is this space of messy creation and piecing together that I would like to explore. Although I acknowledge its potential to cater to the sensory more broadly, here I intend to focus on the haptic potential of collage, extending it beyond the visual to incorporate a specific engagement with the sense of touch.

### Touch

Lucy took her paper to an empty table in the corner. She went and found a pot of glue, some scissors, and a box of scraps. Lucy loved Mrs Kelly’s box of scraps. She liked plunging her

hands deep in the box and feeling with her eyes shut. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.8)

Lucy's proximity to the scraps in the box is evocative of Sedgwick's description of a photograph of textile artist Judith Scott holding one of her works in an embrace: "Through their closeness, the sense of sight is seen to dissolve in favour of that of touch" (2003, p.22). Lucy, like Scott, fully immerses herself in texture to the point at which it is her primary engagement with the material at hand. I will focus on the haptic potential of collage and its ability to create and record knowledge, memory and affect through such an engagement with texture. Anni Albers' writing on "Tactile Sensibility" is a manifesto for the importance of touch (1965/2018). She laments a general desensitisation to texture, stressing touch as both grounding and existential – it relates us to the world around us as well as constituting that world: "We touch things to assure ourselves of reality. We touch the objects of our love. We touch the things we form. Our tactile experiences are elemental" (Albers, 1965/2018, p.44). Here she echoes the theories of embodiment adopted by van Boeckel and Pallasmaa (2020; 2017) but attaches particular weight to haptic perception, as Sedgwick does, as a vehicle for knowledge, both its creation and reception. Even Sedgwick's self-aware choice of the title "*Touching Feeling*" underlines the important affective dimension of touch as both words are laden with emotional connotations (Sedgwick, 2003, p.17).

## Texture

Lucy started her picture. She cut some soft green velvet into curvy mounds, like hills, and stuck them on the paper. She made a lake out of blue shiny stuff, and put it between the hills. Then she found some flowery dress material.

"Grandpa has flowers like this in his garden," Lucy told Mrs Kelly. "He likes the blue ones best because they have the nicest smell."

She cut round the flowers and stuck them in little clumps along the edge of the lake. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.10)

Lucy distinguishes between particular textures and draws associations from what she feels, highlighting that, while texture is central to our engagement with our surroundings, different textures "speak" in different ways. The materiality of objects is, as Albers (1965/2018) stresses in our relation to touch more broadly, imbued with meaning, as well as generative of meaning. Sedgwick draws on Renu Bora's distinction between *texxture* and *texture* to stress the nuances of different haptic experiences. *Texxture* is "dense with offered information about how, substantively, historically, materially, it came into being" (Sedgwick,

2003, p.14), a tactile experience rich with associations. *Texture*, on the other hand, "defiantly or even invisibly blocks or refuses such information" (2003, p.14) about its origins. Nevertheless, such seemingly flat *texture*'s muteness is in itself a form of communication, perhaps even implying the violence associated with the silence it imposes as the "willed erasure of history" (2003, p.15). This very silence speaks volumes. It is not only such supposedly mute textures that create spaces of silence within collage. Charles Garoian describes collage's "silent, in-between spaces" (2016, p.86) as holding both critical and imaginative potential. This negative space between fragments allows for the projection of memory, imagination, and fantasy; these spaces are not only for remembering but also for creativity and, potentially, play.

## Play

At playtime Lucy was too busy to play. Instead she collected twigs and leaves and then she found two small feathers! She filled her empty juice cup with sand from the sandpit. At last it was time to go inside. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.12)

The idea that Lucy is "too busy to play" raises the question of what it is she is *doing*. Rather than being regarded as a means to an end, collage in Arts-Based Research should be conceptualised as a process of piecing together that can be playful and/or focussed. Bateson and Martin claim that "Play generates novel ways of dealing with the environment, most of which lead nowhere but some of which turn out to be useful" (2013, p.4). It is indeed the case that Lucy is developing a novel way of engaging with her environment by gathering items to add to her collage. She is engaging in the embodied practice of shaping her environment and allowing it to shape her and her work. In fact, she enacts what Albers calls for in an engagement with the natural world and its textures, albeit on a smaller, playground-sized scale:

We will look around us and pick up this bit of moss, this piece of bark paper, these stems of flowers, or these shavings of wood or metal. We will group them, cut them, curl them, mix them, finally perhaps paste them, to fix a certain order. We will make a smooth piece of paper appear fibrous by scratching its surface, perforating it, tearing it, twisting it: or we will try to achieve the appearance of fluffy wool by using feathery seeds. [...] We are here revitalising the tactile sense (Albers, 1965/2018, p.46)

Nevertheless, Bateson and Martin (2013) also underline the seemingly pointless nature of play that is at odds with Lucy's focus on the task in hand and the set goal of creating her tactile picture. It could therefore perhaps

more accurately be claimed that Lucy is in a state of flow, characterised by the total absorption in an activity where the level of challenge matches the participant's skill level (Lee, 2013). Yet, the imaginative process Lucy engages in perhaps places her in an overlap of the two, where she is focussed on her acts of experimentation, her play.

## Memory

Now Lucy was very excited about Grandpa's picture. She made him a tree out of the twigs and the leaves, and stuck the feathers on the end of a branch. Then she spread some glue in a long winding band over the hills, and scattered sand over the glue to make a path. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.15)

By incorporating found objects into her collage, Lucy is calling on her grandfather's tactile memory. Collage itself can be used as a means to scaffold and recover memory, drawing on practices established in tactile illustration and art therapy. Florence Bara (2018) interrogates the effects of tactile illustrations on the ability of blind and partially sighted students to recall stories, stressing the intrinsic link between touch and memory that such tactile illustrations facilitate. Similarly, the importance of objects as memory triggers is highlighted by Jackie Norman (2004), who writes about her blind daughter's experience. She likens objects to photographs that allow memories of a particular event that had seemingly lain dormant to reawaken.

This idea of engaging with latent memories is also present in the work of Eliza Homer (2015), an art therapist, who engaged in fabric collage with Veronica, the pseudonym of a woman suffering with mental illness. Homer and Veronica worked together to create what became an (ultimately unfinished) collage blanket. Veronica writes in her journal: "we started putting the pieces together. Like putting the pieces of my life, of myself, together." (2015, p.23). Here she aligns the fragmentation of materials, life and self. Nevertheless, the process of collage is not merely metaphorical or symbolic here but rather generative, allowing Veronica to work through her experiences and make progress with her recovery; the fact that the blanket is never finished underlines that this is ongoing work. Homer stresses that "tactile sensory experiences and rhythmic movement may stimulate additional regions of the brain and therefore augment treatment" (2015, pp.25-26), thereby underlining the central importance of texture and embodiment in her practice, revealing an instance of the power of haptic engagement.

Marianne Hirsch, writing on what she coins "Postmemory" (2008, p.106) also stresses the importance of a need to "reconnect and reembody" (2008, p.110) memory in the

aftermath of traumatic events. Hirsch (2008) is writing on the second generation's relationship to memories of the Holocaust, although she stresses that the concept of "Postmemory" can be extrapolated to other inherited experiences of trauma. She stresses the importance of the photographic image that allows us "to see and to touch" (2008, p.115) the past. While Hirsch (2008) engages with the language of embodiment and acknowledges that the inherited trauma at stake in her discussion is exactly transmitted through embodied, familial experiences, she, much like many practitioners of Arts-Based Research, valorises the visual above the haptic, making recourse to the photograph and its flat, 2D *texture* (Sedgwick, 2003). Hirsch (2008) acknowledges that the idea of inherited memory is seen by some as deeply problematic, as an appropriation of experience, and yet, memory is an intrinsically patchwork project. Siegfried Krakauer also evokes photography to convey the incomplete and fragmented nature of memory, writing: "Compared to photography, memory's records are full of gaps" (1927/2012, p.45). Although his claim rests on the assumption of the inherent truth and completeness of the photographic image, his recognition of the splintered nature of memory is critical to its relationship to collage.

Aleida Assmann maps out this splintered memory into the "four formats" of individual, social, political and cultural memory, stressing how memory often goes beyond direct experience, particularly in the context of her "top down" political memory or artistically mediated "cultural memory" (2002, p.25 & p.31). Here, perhaps, collage can step into the void and offer an embodied means of engaging with memories both contained within our own bodies, what Pierre Nora terms an immediate, "true memory" (1984/2012, p.62), and those memories projected onto our bodies by institutions. Nora cites Proust's infamous *petite madeleine* (1984/2012) to stress the importance of an embodied relationship to memory but outlines that the archive, arguably a materialisation of memory and essentially a collection of fragments, is replacing memories held in the body. Despite this effort to substitute material for experience, he writes: "Archive as much as you like something will always be left out" (Nora, 1984/2012, p.63); the gaps and fragments of memory are inescapable. We will have to work with them, rather than against them, which is where collage can step in.

## Revolt

"My Grandpa's got a dog," Lucy told Mrs Kelly. "She's called Honey because that's what colour she is."

When Mrs Kelly wasn't looking Lucy cut off a tiny piece of her own hair and stuck it in the shape of a dog lying under the tree. (Moon & Ayliffe,

1994, p.16)

Lucy quite literally puts the bodily into collage by incorporating her own hair into her work, adding a textural element from her own body in an exaggerated staging of the embodiment called for by Albers, van Boeckel, Pallasmaa, and Sedgwick (1965/2018; 2020; 2017; 2003). It is precisely the embodied and seemingly trivial nature of collage that renders it a potentially subversive process. Lucy is hiding her action as if it is ever so slightly forbidden. Pallasmaa and Lucero both evoke ideas of revolt in relation to embodiment. Pallasmaa stresses the rebellion inherent in a focus on embodied experience, drawing on Michel Serres, who claims that: “If a revolt is to come, it will have to come from the five senses” (Serres, 1995, p.71, as cited in Pallasmaa, 2017, p.108). Pallasmaa claims that consumer society has exploited and turned us against our bodies by placing ceaseless superficial demands upon them, while simultaneously denying them as sites of important sensory experience. He therefore claims embodied engagement with our surroundings as an important and rebellious reclamation of the body (2017, p.99).

Lucero’s recourse to the notion of rebellion also returns to the body. He claims that:

When I say that most collages are stale and art is to blame, I’m saying that those who make collages—in their attempt to make art of worth—forget how utterly subversive, debased, and effortless the collage gesture can be. (Lucero, 2016, p.6)

Here he is challenging the grandeur attributed to the making of art, a position that is also present in “For Art’s Sake, Stop Making Art”, which he structures as an email to a man named Jon (Lucero, 2017). In this email, however, Lucero goes in exactly the opposite direction to Pallasmaa, reinforcing the dualism of mind and body by writing of the potential to move “the focal point of where ‘art’ happens from the ‘hand’ to the ‘mind’” (2017, p.205). This recourse to the dualism of mind and body, where mind is disproportionately valorised, seemingly contradicts his writing on collage, where he stresses the importance of the “gesture” as the bodily action that breaks with a more highbrow conception of art and can therefore be viewed as a form of artistic revolt in itself.

## Inclusion

“That’s lovely, Lucy,” said Mrs Kelly, when it was time to stop. She put Lucy’s picture safely on the side to dry along with all the paintings. Lucy couldn’t wait until home time. She hadn’t seen Grandpa for ages. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.18)

Lucy’s picture sits on the side among the paintings,

ostensibly included, despite her different, collage-based approach. The apparent absorption of Lucy’s picture into the collection of work of the whole class symbolically aligns it with Antje Mönnig’s conceptualisation of “integration” in the education of blind and partially sighted students in mainstream schooling, where these students are contained within the same system as their sighted contemporaries but are nevertheless differentiated and separated. Mönnig (2016) contrasts this educational approach with “inclusion”, which creates an environment where all students learn together. It is important to trouble the distinction Mönnig draws between “integration” and “inclusion”. Such a differentiation rests on the supposition of a static distinction between what are in fact inherently unstable concepts as, ideas of integration, inclusion, and access more broadly rely on assumptions of a centre and periphery, whereby the experiences of certain groups are deemed to be Other. The question of who holds the power to “include” and who has to be “included” is a loaded and political one. Nevertheless, Mönnig raises the important question of what learning together can look like in different contexts. Both the “ease” of collage (Lucero, 2016, p.6) and its embodied, tactile nature carry potential for it to act as an inclusive and accessible process, particularly for blind and partially sighted people. Nevertheless, it is important to stress the mutual benefits of haptic engagement for both sighted, and blind and partially sighted people, as the Tactile Universe project demonstrates (Bonne et al. 2018). As part of this ongoing project, astronomers create 3D printed tiles of galaxies, alongside other tactile resources, in order to engage blind and partially sighted students with astronomy, a field usually deeply inaccessible to them due to its recourse to visual images. Nicolas Bonne, speaking on the project at York University, underlines that the tactile tiles also make sighted students more acutely aware of the number of stars in an image than when they were just looking, thereby introducing them to new ways of knowing a phenomenon they assumed they had already understood (York Ideas, 2020). The idea of grasping something becomes literal.

## Intergenerational communication

Her mum was waiting as usual, but today there was someone with her.

“Grandpa!” Lucy nearly knocked him off his feet. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.20)

While (apologies for the spoiler that has been a thread running through this article) we know that Lucy’s grandfather is blind and that this is the reason behind her decision to make a tactile picture, collage also has potential as an intergenerational project. With the incidence of dementia predicted to rise as the mean age of the global population increases (Kenning &



Treadaway, 2017), ways of coping and living with and alongside the condition are of the utmost importance. The use of tactile textile collages in dementia research, which seeks to establish this kind of intergenerational understanding and open up conversation, stresses the importance of collage as a collaborative process. Cathy Treadaway leads the LAUGH (Ludic Artefacts Using Gesture and Haptics) dementia research project at Cardiff University, the name of which nods to the importance of the body (gesture) and texture (haptics), as well as the playful (ludic) approach discussed above. In addition, Treadaway's research highlights another important aspect of collage: it has great collaborative potential. This asset renders collage more accessible, as well as opening up new avenues for the shared exploration of memory detailed above as a negotiation of fragments on various levels, be they individual and/or social. Writing on the making of sensory pockets, blankets and aprons that aim to evoke latent memories in the minds of those with dementia, Treadaway stresses the importance of the involvement of family and community in the making process (Treadaway, 2020, Kenning and Treadaway, 2017). She underlines the importance of moving away from a pathologisation of dementia and towards a greater level of understanding and empathy for this change in embodied existence. Again, here collage is bent to the service of memory, but, with every backwards glance, it also looks to the future; how we bring together the fragments of attitudes and memories in the now acts as a mould for the future.

### Tactile illustration

"I've made you a picture, Grandpa. Look..." Lucy grabbed her blind grandfather's hand and guided it over her picture.

"These are hills, and here's the road..."

Grandpa touched the picture carefully. "A tree. A bird. And what's this? It feels like your hair, Lucy."

"That's Honey!" said Lucy, smiling. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, p.22)

At the end of Nicola Moon's story, Lucy's grandfather finally gets to experience Lucy's tactile picture. He successfully identifies many of her illustrations with the exception of his dog, as he is distracted by associations with Lucy's hair. Like Lucy's picture, tactile illustrations often attempt to translate visual images into haptic ones, yet an approach that focuses on the tactile in its own right, beyond the visual, seems to be more effective in conveying some sort of aesthetic experience. ClearVision is a UK charity that acts as a postal lending library for books designed to be shared by sighted, blind and partially sighted people. In ClearVision's guidance for volunteers making tactile books, they highlight

the importance of approaching subject matter from a "tactile perspective" (Ripley, n.d., p.3) and considering how objects convey meaning – for example, towelling standing in for a bathroom (Ripley, n.d., p.3). Here they are drawing on embodied knowledge derived from environmental experience, rather than calling for a relief "translation" of an illustration for a sighted person, which they acknowledge would be too hard to decipher (Ripley, n.d.), an idea also stressed by Raquel Guerreiro (2015), writing on "Aesthetic Accessibility".

Bruno Brites offers an alternative to such visually faithful projects with his poetry book *Mensagem*. Taking a graphic design approach to tactile illustration, Brites (2015) chooses to focus on the importance of materials, and therefore texture, in his work in order to create a product that is fascinating to blind, partially sighted and sighted audiences. Such an implementation of texture in illustration draws on remembered haptic experiences to generate an aesthetic experience but also has practical implications for legibility. At the *dzb lesen*, my collage class was not only shown collage illustrations but also illustrations made in plastic relief. One example of a failed book was a copy of the *Kama Sutra* as the illustrations had been done in plastic relief and the bodies could not be distinguished due to the fact that they shared the same mute texture (Sedgwick, 2003). Albers' writing on "Tactile Sensibility" also rings true for tactile illustration:

We will learn to use grain and gloss, smoothness, roughness, the relief-quality of combined heavy and fine material – those elements of form that belong to the aesthetic side of tactile experience – and will find them equally as important as areal divisions and colour. (1965/2018, p.46)

Texture allows for an aesthetic experience due to its ability to communicate through the body, without the tedious comprehension task of decoding a visual image translated into relief.

### Conclusion

"You are clever. And what a lovely surprise. It's the best picture I've ever seen!" said Grandpa.

And hand in hand, Grandpa, and Lucy and her mother walked home for tea. (Moon & Ayliffe, 1994, pp.22-24)

In the penultimate sentence of the book, Lucy's grandfather returns to the language of the visual, thereby illustrating the attitude I wish to depart from in this examination of collage. Springgay underlines that such language is rooted in a hierarchy that privileges the visual as a way of knowing: " 'I see' has commonly connoted knowing or understanding, while 'I feel' is often associated with intuitive knowing, which has historically been condemned as ridiculous

and dismissed as trivial” (2010, p.119). Rather than a substitute for “seeing”, tactile illustration and embodied engagement with collage need to be regarded as ways of knowing, of feeling, in their own right. Albers (1965/2018) warned of the desensitisation of the sense of touch and this is potentially even more true of the digital age, which is awash with *texture* (Sedgwick, 2003), although technology does provide new haptic experiences in its own right. A broad conceptualisation of collage that valorises haptic potential and encourages embodied engagement as an ongoing and collaborative process can and should inform the implementation of collage as a potentially inclusive practice in Arts-Based Research. Having taken a journey through “Lucy’s Picture” to examine: embodiment, a conceptualisation of collage, touch, texture, play, memory, revolt, inclusion, intergenerational communication, and tactile illustration, I hope to have demonstrated the haptic potential of collage, fragmenting my own writing in the process with the very object that has allowed me to start piecing together the practice of collage itself: “Lucy’s Picture”.

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