## **DOCUMENTING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: PAINTINGS/STORIES FROM THE EASTSIDE**



Well, since I was a baby, I stayed in the hospital and when I was old enough, I lived with my momma in Colorado. After that, we moved on Cornell Street. It was quiet there but the landlord kicked us out so we had to live with my granny. We lived there until my momma got a job and had enough money for her to pay for us to live in a house. So, we moved to the west side on 62nd and Indiana. We saw a bunch of rats there, so my momma found this house on 74th Street. There was this boy named BJ that always tried to steal our stuff. My momma got tired of it, so she looked for another house. One day my papa called my momma and told her he had found her a house on Cornell. She had liked it, so we moved back to Cornell in this little pink house. We have been living in it for two years now. It's a pink and white house. Things were going good for a while until one day my momma and her boyfriend started arguing while we were trying to sleep. Then they started arguing a lot. This little kid on the street likes to pick on people a lot. So the police began coming over to Cornell many times. I had seven dogs plus three puppies. But one day five got out and never returned. And then there were dogs around the block that barked all of the time. What I am trying to say is that I am trapped in a house that is driving me crazy.

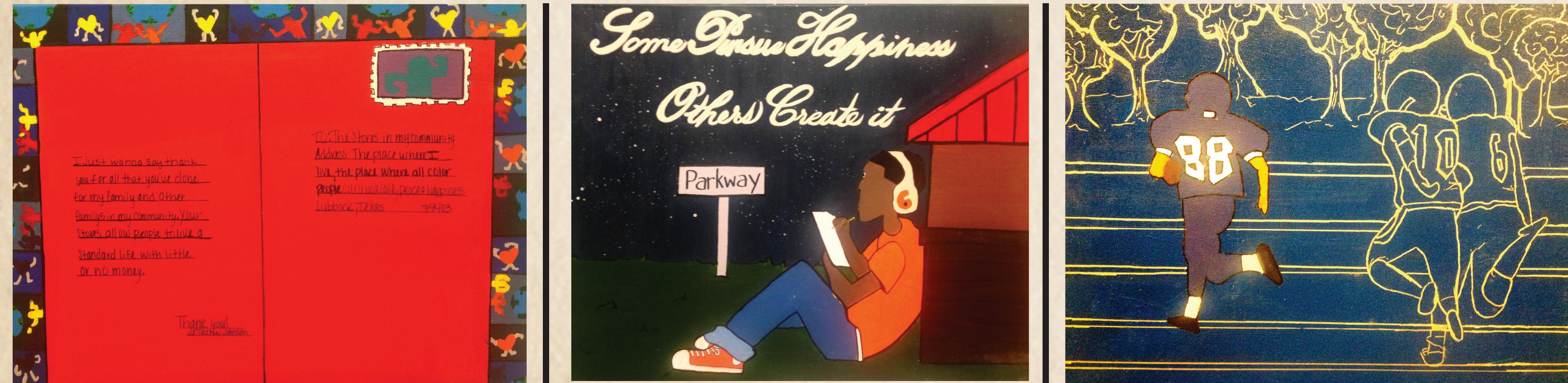
Just wanna say thank you for all that you've clobe for my family and other milus in my community. Your Hopes all UW people to live a tandard life with little or no money.

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Lubbock, Texas, is a place I call home, a place where I lived almost my entire life. It's also known as the "Hub City." Then there is a part of Lubbock where I live, called the East Side. There is not much over here, but it is my community and I love it. When you go to the other sides of Lubbock, you may say "Wow!" "How come all of these stores are nowhere near the east side? They do not have this many stores?" Well honestly it really doesn't matter, because we have a few stores on our side of town, in our community. Who said why not let us all live equal by providing us the same employment, same product of food, and also places to get clothes, if we don't' have enough money to afford the expensive stuff. Stores such as United Supermarket, Family Dollar, and Dollar General, all give me, my family, and other families the chance to live a standard of life, like everyone else on the other side of town. I just want to say thank you to all of you for this amazing opportunity to at least let us have a little living in our lives.

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Music is my life and this is where I write Whether it's a sunny day or a dark night It's always quiet, well not always quiet But this day it was so I began to write The wind kept me focused I wrote rhyme after rhyme Relaxed not being rushed all I had was time And now the rhymes are stuck with me ever since that night I will never forget the first day I began to write.

and started to read it

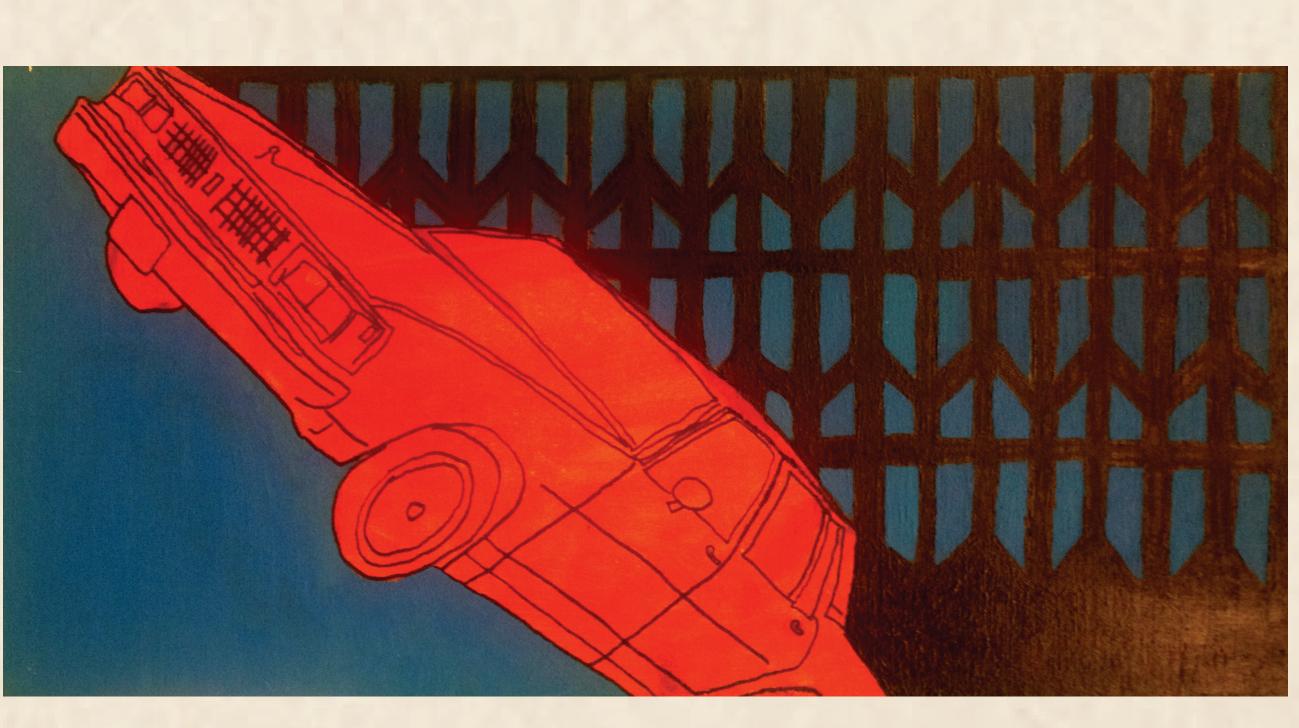
Cassie, I'm sorry but your step-mom can't handle you anymore. So we are leaving. You have to find somewhere else to stay. You can't come with me. So if you can't find anyone, call CPS to come and get you. Love, Your Dad

I looked at Cassaie and I started to cry. I told her everything is going to be ok promise. So we walked to my house told mom the problem. She asked Cassie if she had any other family that lived here and she said "Yes, my grandma. So we went and told her grandma what was going on. Her grandma straight up told Cassie that she cannot stay with her; that she didn't want anything to do with her ever since she was born. She said to get out of her house. So, we took her in till we can find someone. Well, Cassie and me were like sisters. We would do everything together. We would go shopping and get ready in the morning before school. We would spend time together all the time. Well, until that phone call came. It was CPS, so we went up to the CPS office. They told us she has to be put in a foster home, that she could not stay with us. She has been in five different foster homes her whole life. So, we had to say our goodbyes and cried. I watched her walk away with tears. I have not heard from he since. We pray every night for Cassie that everything goes well and that she will be in a good home and that she will be happy.



This is a portrait of my grandfather. He was a preacher at a local church. I looked up to him and he is my role model.

I play football for Estacado High school. In my sophomore year, I made a game winning play. The main reason I play football is because I can take my frustration out on the field. This is why I became interested in the first place. If I am frustrated, I can get things off of my mind. I have been playing football since the age of 7. Heart, attitude, awareness, faith, and teamwork are what you need to have to play football.



that I am 16, I'm driving it however and whenever I want.

	Ayers, W. (2003). On the
2	Bigelow, B., Harvey, B., H
	Burnham, L. F. & Durlan
5	Chapadjiev, S. (Ed.). (20
J	Christensen, L. (2001). V
7	Volume II (pp. 6-10).
	Ellis, C. (2008). Revision
	Elizabeth, L. & Young, S.
	hooks, b. (1995). Art on
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	Nokes, J. & Jasper, P. (20
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	Perr, H. (1988). Making

Located on the High Plains of West Texas, Lubbock is a city of 229,000 people, housing two major medical centers, three universities and two colleges. Estacado High School is one of 5 high schools within Lubbock Independent School District. Located on the east side of Lubbock, the Estacado neighborhood is plagued by poverty (approximately 94% of students are eligible for free/reduced price lunch programs), stereotypes and outsider bias. Expected neighborhood amenities are absent with only limited shopping venues: one grocery store, a discount store, one fast food chain outlet, and no close medical facility.

With a goal of preparing our students for a successful career in education, we look for sites of unwarranted stereotype, fear and educational neglect where we can propose and execute outreach endeavors. This poster documents collaboration between Texas Tech University Visual Studies (VS) program and art teacher Shannon Walton at Estacado High School during the spring semesters of 2012 and 2013. Pre-service VS students worked with an Art I classes to develop/create paintings based on what students "liked" about their eastside neighborhood. Many of the paintings spoke to the humanity of all students. Others addressed stereotypes students had experienced. Visual Studies students met weekly with the high school students to help guide their artistic practices and gain valuable mentoring experience. Estacado students were "invited" to bring their lives into their classroom and paintings.

Paintings were displayed at an art exhibition at the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts in Lubbock, Texas in 2012. In 2013, the theme was shifted to a visual representation of Linda Christensen's (2001) essay "Where I'm From: Inviting Students' Lives into the Classroom. This translated into an "I Am From" assignment/exhibition. Student art works and writing reminds us as educators and as artists how the visual arts play integral parts to not only teaching and learning but in being human and a possibility to heal through art. Our various narratives that follow are windows into how we describe our place in this outreach process (Ellis, 2008).

Delta 88. That's what I am drawing. The reason why I am drawing this is because it is my car. I had this car ever since I was twelve. The car is very special to me because my dad and uncle bought it just for me. Now

FUTURE AKINS-TILLETT. Associate Professor For the first eleven years of my early education. I was schooled in remote rural areas where it was common to be let out for cotton picking or having assemblies on the dangers of hunting. Art was not a priority in my schools to say the least. I know this is the underlying reason I am always thinking of ideas that can be used for an outreach project. I remember that young woman who longed for something new, something about art or something that would bring new choices into my limited education. I also accept that each event allows me to return to the art classroom, if only for a few hours a week.

When Shannon Walton accepted us into her classroom, it was like working with a long time friend. We easily stepped aside for the college students to begin their learning practices. Yet, we did not hesitate to jump in when extra hands were needed to demonstrate a process, or when pizzas had to be ordered for an after- school final push to complete the artwork. Viewing the final works of art, reading the stories, and seeing how the students (high school and university undergrads) were proud and excited by their collaborative efforts is an enduring lesson.

Growing up white in Midwest working class environs in the 1960s and 1970s, I listened to lots of worker stories and later realized that for me art had to be about stories as well. I never saw these working class stories at school or in public art. I worked for many summers in college as a playground leader in the inner-city of Milwaukee, I watched and listened. Like the artist Lily Yeh, I try to position myself in places where art might be a tool (my father was a carpenter) to help people or neighborhoods to flourish. Educator Gloria Ladson-Billings writes about successful teachers of African American children. She outlines educational self-determination and respect of students' home culture as ways to equip students to change their worlds for the better. That's what I remember growing up. Herb Perr's Lesson 23: Picture Your Community Through Photojournalism exemplifies this for me in terms of not only helping me rethink what art can be and who can make it, but also how it can help heal cultural wounds.<sup>1</sup> It ties in nicely with Ladson-Billings. Objectives of the lesson are to "promote community pride and knowledge," "to research and record the community's heritage and culture" (p. 117), and produce art. Students get to share what they know and care about as they make their art. Their lives, homes and neighborhoods form the backbone of the lesson. As facilitators of this outreach, it was important to not only invite student lives into the classroom but also hear and validate their stories and honor them publicly.<sup>2</sup> Students had to know that teachers and university students had their backs that we were on their sides.<sup>3</sup> As practicing citizen artists, students' particular voices and art were strong and visceral.<sup>4</sup> African American working class and working poor voices, lives and neighborhoods become part of a vast visual world neighborhood, one where they are self-represented and seen.<sup>5</sup>

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## **SHANNON WALTON.** Art Teacher

I come from Dallas neighborhoods and schools that consist mainly of Black and Hispanic families and students. Moving to Lubbock and Texas Tech University, this was no longer the norm for me. I was the only black person in most of my classes, in my dorm, and in certain restaurants. It became painfully obvious to Lubbock lacked black and brown people. It took me several years later to understand why. The Eastside of Lubbock is considered "the other side of the train tracks." I heard from a few Tech students even a professor or two, that I should not go to the Eastside. That the Eastside is ghetto. And, that there is no reason to go over there. My first time to the Eastside came when I had to drop a friend off at her home. drove through the neighborhoods and down the streets, for the first time since moving to Lubbock, I felt like I was at home. The neighborhood felt like mine back in Dallas. As I looked around, I saw many black lispanic people walking down the street, mowing their yards, sitting on their porches. It was peaceful and wonderful, nothing like the image that was painted for me. From that moment on, I knew that I had to be a part of this community. When an art vacancy opened at Estacado High School, I quickly applied for the job.

During my undergraduate work at Tech, I was able to participate in several outreach opportunities. Those outreach classes allowed me to work one-on-one with students and get to know them: their likes and dislikes, what sports they played, what foods they liked, and what they did after school. I simply got to know them as persons outside of being a student. In the spring of 2012, I was more than willing to welcome Texas Tech students and Future and Ed to come work with my students as an outreach. I felt it was important for these very young and inexperienced 20-22 year-olds to come to my classroom and experience my students for themselves. I knew they were given the same unrealistic painting of the Eastside as I was given at that age. In my heart, I knew it was extremely important for them to meet my students and see for themselves that my students have stories, are real people, and that their lives mattered. The experience was an eye opener for those Tech students. My students had beautiful, funny, heart-breaking, and even terrifying stories to tell to the Tech students. Their view of the Eastside and Estacado were changing. I could see it. I could feel it. I welcome Texas Tech into my class often so they can get hands-on, real life experiences from the same children that they one day will teach. I feel my job is done when they one day get a teaching job and walk in with an open heart because of what THEY have learned from Estacado students.

## ED CHECK. Associate Professor

<sup>1</sup> See Bigelow, B. et al, 2001, Rethinking Our Classrooms, Volume II.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapadjiev, 2008; Christensen, 2001; Elizabeth & young, 2006; Ellis, 2008; and Park, 2009. <sup>3</sup> See William Ayers, On the Side of the Child. <sup>4</sup> See Burnham & Durland, 1998 and bell hooks, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See Nokes & Jasper, 2007 and Walljasper, 2007.

JAYSON LUCE. Outreach Student and former Student Teacher

When I started the outreach as a university student in 2012. Shannon Walton assigned me to a special needs student. As I sat down with what appeared to me as a shy young woman the first day, I asked her what her neighborhood was like. She described it as the horrific sound of dogs barking, cop sirens, and people yelling at each other. As I looked into her eves. I could tell how frightened she was, without her ever having to say a word. Coming from a quiet middle class neighborhood, I struggled to relate with the horror she lived with everyday. Over the course of that semester. I learned more from this student than I could ever teach her. By example this student taught me to always stay strong no matter how difficult my surroundings. The negative people around me, and the noise of everyday life can wear on me, cause me to stress, and sometimes make me want to give up. She proved to me how strong she was, even though her home life was falling apart. Her story will forever hold a special place in my heart, and the reason why l chose the path of an educator.

> The following year I asked to be placed in this same art room for student teaching. I chose to return to Estacado because of the amazing personalities of the students and the family atmosphere in the art room. I felt like I belonged in the art room, not as a teacher, but as a friend. I wasn't referred to as Mr. Luce, but as "Bro." I loved it! I instantly felt a connection with my students. My students were inviting my life into their classroom, something I asked of them, but never practiced myself. Being gay and a student teacher, I was private about my personal life. But students somehow knew. I wasn't treated differently for being the "gay teacher." I felt accepted. I felt they made me feel like a friend. That student teaching experience is where I learned more about myself: as a teacher, as a student, and as a person. I will always treasure the relationships I formed with my students at Estacado, and I want to personally thank them for teaching me as well.

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