

Victoria Wan
VISA 483 001
Aleksandra Dulic and James Tanner
February 5, 2012

Artist Interview: Tancha Dirickson

I had the pleasure of working with Tancha Dirickson in my second year, helping her put together her exhibit *A is for Apple*. Thanks to her I had a valuable experience learning about gallery spaces and preparing exhibitions.

I also got glimpses of her personally. I saw aspects of her life I knew I'd eventually have to deal with in the future, such as how to manage the art world and taking care of a family at the same time?

Tancha is a vibrant unique woman, whom I greatly admire. It seems appropriate to feature her here.

1. What are your origins? And what brought you to the Okanagan?

I was born in Brazil. When I was 32 years old I moved to California after I got married. In 2003, we decided to immigrate with our children to Canada to expand my husband's marina consultancy and real estate investments. It was for ideological reasons in my case. I believe that Canada, as a country, offers the non-North American born more opportunities to be productive and is a land truly open to the newcomer. In my view, Canadian society is, generally speaking, a compassionate one. The Okanagan valley with its agricultural production and gorgeous and diverse natural landscape offered us, at that time, a sure and safe place to raise our family.

2. Why did you become an artist?

I became an artist because that is what I am meant to be. I have a very fertile imagination and I am a very curious individual always open to read and explore new things. Art was and is always in my life. For instance, I was trained as a biomedical researcher and I remember, while at the university, being marveled by my cytological studies making elaborate and imaginative drawings for what I was seeing in the microscopic. Later on, in Carmel, California I opened an art gallery specialized in Brazilian contemporary art, so I started to learn about the art business and how to exhibit and market art. In my spare time, at my gallery's courtyard, I started to experiment with paintings, until I was able to enroll myself at a local art college. Throughout my journey to this day I keep alive my thirst for learning about art in its varied myriads through incessant research online and through books and magazines.

3. What type of art practices do you do? What are your intentions with your art?

I believe I am an artist who needs to express myself through non-object based paintings and prints where I explore fields of color and localized "islands." (see fig 1.1) This part of my practice seems to attend my emotional side and my need for solitude and meditative frame of mind. However, since 2004 my interests and pursuits have shifted to inter-media projects involving installation, performance and video art. Often, these projects are participatory pieces creating platforms for public interaction. I am still interested in painting and printing, but I believe I can make better critical commentaries about our contemporary age through these inter-media projects. I enjoy organizing and managing these artistic events, which involves a more rational frame of mind where one must attend to a specific budget, inventing solutions and writing grants.

My intentions with my art is to attend to my imagination and I hope to contribute, as an artist, to discussions about particular socio-political themes such as preservation of agricultural land, feminist issues, language barriers, to name a few.

4. Why did you choose UBC Okanagan to study and to complete your MFA?

The program at UBC-O was a perfect fit to my interests because of its interdisciplinary approach to its program at a graduate level. Also, it is open to non-traditional manners of art making and giving the grad students opportunities to design their own program.

For me, for what I wanted to achieve it was a great experience if minor considerations. The professors that I had at UBC-O greatly contributed to my growth as an artist.

5. What challenges have there been for you as an artist?

The ultimate challenge is how to make a fair living out of my chosen career. As a mature middle career artist I am still looking for a professional opportunity where I can receive a steady income in parallel with my practice.

It would be helpful to have more exhibition opportunities and financial support platforms for experimental and inter-media projects. Lately, this kind of art making is getting its deserved attention but a lot still needs to be done to ensure its existence.

6. You've managed to juggle both the demands of a family caretaker and of the art world. What advice would you offer to those in a similar position?

I enjoy and take pride in my home; I try my best in taking care of the needs of my household and all its two legged (and four legged) inhabitants. I can live with certain amounts of chaos, but I know my limits. I advise practical and everyday discipline with daily household chores. Do not be afraid to be selfish. If you do a lot for others, as I do for my family, you will have a reserve on the bank to be a bit selfish!

I try to keep myself as organized as possible, but use a system and a methodology that works for you. Making lists helps me. Check your goals constantly and plan strategies for your artistic growth as well individual growth and then make your moves accordingly to achieve these objectives.

If the ones around you are not doing their fair share, one last advice: Scream! I have had great results doing just this!

7. What advice would you give to me and my fellow aspiring artists on how move forward in the art world?

Believe in collaboration in all facets of your life. Ask for favors and do favors. Keep track of your successes and failures as well through a diary, it doesn't need to be a daily journey, just write when you need it. Document all you do in diverse format. Believe me! You will need this documentation to apply for jobs, grants or future publications.

Pay attention that if nothing is working the way you want it to. Perhaps it is time for pause and recovery; perhaps it is time for an incubation period. Do not be hard on yourself, or too critical. Your gift to yourself is to truly believe in the artistic process as a whole. We are all here to learn, keep trying and believe in your creative process and what it can bring to you, both personally and artistically.

8. What do you think the future holds for you?

I am looking forward in going to Europe, my first trip ever there! I'm to attend an artist residency program in a small town in Provence, called Greve. While I am there I am planning to develop a relational aesthetics based event with the community and within the medieval town of Greve. I am also very excited to view art museums to expand my knowledge of European art history and check the contemporary experimental art scene in Italy.

While I am waiting for things to unfold, I am putting together a proposal called ART/SITE for an international annual art event. This event will have its main focus in site-specific projects to be held in Salt Spring, but lots of things must be in place for this to happen.



Figure 1.1 *Untitled III*, monoprint, 10x10" ,Tancha Drickson, May 2008, photo courtesy of artist