
Thank you for submitting

ARC Engage Final Report

Our team may reach out to you with follow-up requests for clarification regarding your submission.

Review your submission responses below:

Researcher First Name: **Suzi**

Researcher Last Name: **Webster**

Department: **Fine Arts**

Other Department:

Department Head's Email: **alandin@langara.ca**

Project Title: **Exploring menopausal beauty and sexuality through practise based research**

Start semester: **9/1/2024**

End Semester: **8/31/2025**

Introduction - Please introduce yourself and include pertinent background information as it relates to your project's research area. **Suzi Webster is an internationally exhibiting artist, who also has a background in research, including the following practise based research projects: Independent 2011/2014 • Electric Heart, a bio-responsive wearable with research partners from BCIT's Center for Applied Research and the award winning UBC Electrical and Computer Engineering in Medicine team. (NSERC funded) 2011 • Future Lab Environments of Play, lead researcher with three research assistants and industrial partners Mountain Equipment Co-op and Science World. (NSERC funded) 2010 • ReCite: Investigating Hyperlocal Geo Narratives on Mobile Platforms with lead researcher Dr Maria Lantin and industrial partner Lat49. • SafetyLab Design and Art Interdisciplinary Collaboration with co-researcher Helene Day Fraser and industrial partner Lululemon. • Performance Material testing with industrial**

partner Lululemon

Please discuss your educational background and your work experience as it relates to this project. If possible, include a quote that helps define your interest in the project. Suzi Webster has a dual major BA degree in Law and English Literature from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, followed by a diploma in Fine Art from Langara College, a BFA from Emily Carr University and a MFA from the Slade school of Fine Art, University College London. Webster taught at Emily Carr University and was instrumental in helping to develop their Wearable and Interactive products Lab before joining the team at Langara. As well as being a full time continuing faculty, Suzi has served the Fine Arts department by acting as Department Chair, and the college generally by being a Dean's representative and serving on many committees. "Menopause is still very stigmatized in our culture, and art can help to make things more visible."

Please summarize your project in plain language that others not in your field could understand. For an artist, practise based research involves making art. For this project, I worked with a live model going through perimenopause. We used a 3d scanner to scan the model, and then digitally sculpted the 3d file to be able to print using a 3d printer. The project is technically very challenging to work at that scale, and so much experimentation and problem solving occurred. Once the 3d prints were successful, I was then able to make casts of the figures in various experimental materials including chocolate, wax and stone. Menopause is a significant life stage for women, yet it is often accompanied by feelings of invisibility, loss, and stigma, particularly regarding beauty and sexuality. This practice-based research proposal aims to use new technologies to create a range of semi-ephemeral sculptures in wax, earth, and organic materials like chocolate to explore menopausal beauty and sexuality. The project seeks to inspire women to initiate conversations about menopause within their communities and challenge societal perceptions of aging and femininity. Menopause is an under-researched area and this project aims to contribute much needed perspective.

Identify the project goals and objectives. Explain how the results may be used to solve a problem or inform further research in the field. The purpose of this study is to explore how different sculptural materials can symbolically represent the lived experiences of individuals going through menopause and perimenopause. The study will use focus groups to understand which materials and poses resonate with participants and why, in relation to their personal journeys through this phase of life. Through this qualitative research approach, we aim to identify materials that capture the physical, emotional, and psychological dimensions of menopause and perimenopause. The creation process is in itself a methodology that integrates reflection, creation and audience engagement. Practice-based research is a methodology that emphasizes the process of creating or performing as a primary means of inquiry and knowledge generation. It integrates practical

engagement—such as art, design, or performance—with theoretical analysis, producing both new insights and tangible outcomes that contribute to the field of study. Focus groups are an established mechanism for data collection across qualitative, mixed method, and quantitative methodologies (Pearson, D., & Vossler, A. (2016)

Briefly explain the steps taken (methods used) to conduct the research, and describe the key findings. *These sculptures will continue to be exhibited in various venues, and the collaborative art project will continue to inspire conversation and community engagement.*

Who was involved in this project (eg. faculty, students, community partners)? How did their involvement contribute to the project's success? Were there any challenges to overcome? *Faculty, three student assistants and Pharmasave on the Drive as a community partner. In addition, partnering with the documentary the M Factor to arrange community screenings and conversations around the film with the wider college community.*

Please share any personal stories that made this research experience memorable/valuable.

We had to overcome many obstacles, including a serious health scare for one student researcher, the length of time to obtain REB approval, lack of initial engagement with focus groups and troubleshooting the complex technologies used. However, the spirit of camaraderie and group participation felt very inspiring, as did the response of women who felt that their lived experiences were being validated through the materials and sculptures.

What are the next steps for this project and for you as a researcher?

Creative Process (Practise based approach) • Conceptualization • Creation of Sculptures • Material exploration Audience engagement - Burning ceremony • Exhibition • Reflection and Analysis

Please upload any images that will help to showcase your project.

By submitting, I consent to uploading my ARC Fund final report to the Langara Institutional Repository (The LalR). *True*

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